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EVENTS OF THE WEEK

FOR the first time since M. Poincaré's accession to power, the Franco-German situation has changed so decidedly for the better, that it becomes possible to entertain serious hopes of a satisfactory solution of the world's most formidable problem. The French Government seems definitely to have written off the Separatist movement in the Rhineland as a failure; and there is much inspired talk of a willingness to evacuate the Ruhr, if "equivalent guarantees" can be obtained. This leaves us, of course, a long way from a settlement; but the important fact is that M. Poincaré seems now to be anxious for a settlement. The new British Government could have no greater stroke of luck. Few will take seriously Mr. MacDonald's rather unworthy suggestion that the result is to be attributed to his friendly gesture to M. Poincaré in contrast to Lord Curzon's "beastly clever Notes." But the fact of the change of Government in this country has at least provided M. Poincaré with an opportune moment for a reversal of policy to which he has come round mainly under the influence of the logic of events, and the imminence of the French elections. When the expert committees set up under the Reparation Commission present their reports, Mr. MacDonald will be able to get to business, with a better chance of success than any of his predecessors have had.

We comment elsewhere on the indications of policy to be gleaned from the Prime Minister's statement in the House on Tuesday. The sensation of the debate was provided by Mr. Asquith's gravely worded strictures on Mr. Wheatley's action in rescinding the Poplar Order. In view of the prevalence of the absurd notion that, while the new Government are controlled in their legislative activities by their minority position, they can act just as they choose in matters of administration, Mr. Asquith did wisely to make it clear beyond any possibility of doubt that the Liberal Party will tolerate no abuse of administrative power. But it is now reasonable to conclude that this particular episode may be regarded as an isolated one. Mr. Ramsay MacDonald took pains to convey that Mr. Wheatley had acted without any con-

sultation with the Cabinet. "So small did the operation seem to the Department itself . . . that it took it for granted that the rescinding of the Order was nothing but a merely mechanical operation." The "operation" was, of course, nothing of the kind. It is not true, as was suggested in the apologia issued from the Ministry of Health, that the Poplar Order had been superseded or rendered unnecessary by the Local Authorities Act, 1923; for, as Mr. Asquith pointed out, the latter merely defines the extent of the local relief that can be thrown on the Metropolitan Common Fund. But it is unlikely that Mr. Wheatley will take similar action again without consulting his colleagues, or will succeed in obtaining their assent. The episode may, indeed, serve a healthy purpose, especially if it leads to the review of the structure of London government and the whole Poor Law system, which Mr. Asquith urged.

After much heart-searching and discussion behind the scenes, the Unionist Party has decided to retain Mr. Baldwin as its leader, and to drop the advocacy of a general protective tariff. The unanimous vote of confidence, proposed by Lord Balfour and supported by Mr. Austen Chamberlain at the party meeting last Monday, marked a great personal triumph for Mr. Baldwin, but he is said to be more than willing to make way for another leader whenever the party can discover an acceptable candidate. Meanwhile, he has made some piquant remarks about those of his supporters "who are content to subscribe a guinea" to the party funds, "and then expect a knighthood for it." He has also contributed a good-tempered speech to the opening debate in the House, in which he cautioned the Government to beware of their new friends in Russia, and observed, rather sadly, that no one realizes more than he does how, in dealing with France, "sweet reasonableness may be carried to excess without reaping any of the rewards which are its due."

It is still uncertain as we go to press whether a dock strike can be averted. Even a short stoppage would be a national calamity. Its effects would be felt in every

department of national life and would persist long after the resumption of work. There could be no greater blow to the incipient trade recovery. In any event, the dispute will go down to history as a classic example of how not to handle a case. After refusing absolutely even to discuss the men's demands, the employers have offered very substantial concessions—1s. a day increase and an inquiry into the question of maintenance. It is common knowledge that the employers were far from unanimous in approval of the attitude first adopted, and public opinion generally regards Lord Devonport and the section he represents as a dangerous anachronism; but Mr. Bevin and Mr. Tillett appear to regard this, not as an encouragement to continue negotiations, but as an incitement to burn their boats and declare for battle to the death.

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Both sides have issued lengthy explanations of their case, but information is still lacking as to the most vital point—the average weekly earnings. The Union have not the information, and the employers have put forward only carefully selected instances. Without this information, the public may well feel that the arguments of either side are in the air. The question of decasualization is discussed elsewhere in this issue. We believe all who have studied the question will agree that this is by far the most important question. Higher daily wages, by attracting more and more men to the docks, tend to defeat the object of securing to the docker an adequate weekly wage. At the same time, it is obvious that, at this stage of the dispute, it is hopeless to expect a settlement on the lines of the employers' offer of a committee of investigation, unless a compromise can be arrived at on the question of the increase in daily wages. It is essential that the Government should put pressure on both sides to effect such a compromise and, at the same time, make it clear that they are prepared to grapple seriously with the problem of maintenance, and that any inquiry that may be set up will not be adopted as a method of shelving the question. We believe that there would be widespread support for any genuine and practical attempt to put an end to conditions disgraceful to a civilized society.

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The Separatist farce in the Palatinate (though in reality it was a good deal more serious than a farce) has ended in a Separatist tragedy. After all that has happened, the outbreak that resulted on Wednesday in some thirty or more of the Separatist gang being burned alive in Pirmasens Town Hall or clubbed to death as they fled from the holocaust was a less grave development, despite its essential hideousness, than sober students of the situation might have feared and did fear. The localizing of the outbreak, when there was imminent peril of civil war through the whole Palatinate, Ruhr, and Rhineland, is ground for some relief, and this expression of the pent-up feelings of the brigand-ridden populace in a single town emphasizes the restraint shown by the inhabitants of the occupied area elsewhere, for, unarmed though they were, their numbers would have made them formidable in street-fighting. The Pirmasens massacre—in which the population unfortunately showed much the same brutality as has consistently marked the actions of their opponents—is, of course, the direct sequel of French policy, which first removed the German officials and then withdrew military support from its own *agents provocateurs*, without, apparently, taking any steps to extricate them from their position. It is to be hoped that the incident will not be adduced as a reason why the foreshadowed agreement between the occupying Powers over the Palatinate régime should not be carried through.

The decisive vote in the Indian Legislative Council on the various Swaraj motions has been unexpectedly postponed till Monday. On the whole, the Government appears to be strengthening its position as the debate proceeds, and the hope that the independents may rank themselves against the extremists rather than with them seems justified. Dr. Gour's motion urging that a representative convention be immediately summoned to frame a new constitution for India has been defeated, and it ought to be by no means impossible for the Government to concede a form of inquiry which all reasonable Indian elements would accept. It is quite true that the reformed constitution was intended to run for ten years in the first instance, but enough experience has already been acquired to make at any rate an interim examination of its working desirable. The system of dyarchy is admittedly unsatisfactory, and in certain provinces it has been practically discarded by tacit agreement between Governor and Council. The difficulty, of course, is to find a workable alternative. If the Swaraj party insists on forcing the issue, and forces it successfully, a grave situation will undoubtedly be created. On the other hand, a Government victory, followed by a genuine and comprehensive inquiry, would clear the air a good deal. Meanwhile, the declaration of Mr. Gandhi against reversion to civil disobedience is reassuring, and tends to dissipate the fear that the Mahatma's release from prison might be a source of fresh trouble.

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A rather absurd fuss has been made about the order for five locomotives placed by the Indian Stores Department with a German firm. The firm in question, whose tender was about 20 per cent. below the lowest British tender, has long been on the list of approved contractors, and the action of the Department was in strict compliance with the instructions given to the High Commissioner in 1921, that stores required for India should ordinarily be bought in the cheapest market, consistently with quality and delivery, and that no special preference should be given to British firms. Under these conditions 95 per cent. of the railway orders placed by the Stores Department during the six months ended September last, and 92 per cent. of those placed during the calendar year 1922, came to the United Kingdom, so that the alarm excited by the present transaction appears to be excessive. In any event, it seems to us to be of the utmost importance that the present procedure should be strictly adhered to in India, whatever line may be taken with regard to contracts placed by the British and Dominion Governments. The present position of the Government of India is one of peculiar delicacy, and any suspicion that prices were raised against India by a preference to British contractors might do untold harm.

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While the present position of parties is a bar to spectacular achievement, it offers an excellent opportunity for carrying through much really useful work. The Government have shown good sense in adopting a number of non-contentious measures introduced by their predecessors or proposed in the King's Speech, and will introduce Bills relating to the removal of the thrift bar to old age pensions, the improvement of the position of pre-war pensioners, legitimization, a probationary system of dealing with offenders, and the amendment and consolidation of the Factory Acts. The substantial measure of agreement already reached on these questions should ensure smooth passage for a considerable block of overdue legislation. Merchants, bankers, and shipowners alike will welcome Mr. Sidney Webb's announcement that the Carriage of Goods by Sea Bill is to be pushed as rapidly

as possible. There will be general approval, too, for the Prime Minister's appointment of a strong Committee to advise on the policy for ending the present deadlock with regard to Imperial wireless. We hope no indiscretions by wild men on either side of the House will be allowed to interfere with this eminently practical programme.

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Mr. Ammon, Parliamentary Secretary to the Admiralty, has announced that, while those responsible for the present Government had always taken the view that no cause had been shown for the proposed expenditure on Singapore, they thought it right to examine the scheme in detail before announcing their decision, and are proceeding to do so. Meanwhile, instructions have been given to the officers on the spot not to incur further commitments. He added that the Dominions would be consulted, and it is right that they should be, though the responsibility for a final decision must rest with the home Government. In this connection we note that Mr. Charlton, Leader of the Australian Labour Party, has strenuously denied Mr. Bruce's assertion that Australia desires the scheme to go through. Mr. Charlton's opposition appears to rest partly on a remarkable optimism as to Australia's capacity to create a "separate defence"; but he goes straight to the real issue in saying that "Japan has played the game with Australia, and Australia should not adopt an attitude of antagonism." We have always believed this to be an instance where the strategical risk—if it exists—should be run, in preference to the political risk of disturbing the unusually satisfactory relations established in the Pacific, and we are glad to see that at least one section of Australian opinion appreciates this aspect of the question.

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Very few people not directly concerned in an attempt to trade with Germany realize that the Reparations Recovery Duty, imposed in an abortive attempt to extract reparations, and a ludicrous failure from the first, is still in force. But so it is, as Mr. William Graham, the Financial Secretary, was reminded by a deputation representing the trades affected which waited upon him last Monday. The deputation pointed out that the German Reparations (Recovery) Act had ceased to function (they might have said that it never functioned) along the lines endorsed by Parliament when it was placed on the Statute Book. The whole procedure embodied in the Act was based on an assumed co-operation on the part of the German Government. This co-operation having lapsed, a levy on the German Exchequer has been converted into a direct levy on the British taxpayer. We are glad to note that Mr. Graham recognized the urgency of the problem and the necessity of an early decision. It is high time that the duty was repealed.

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It would be interesting to hear Mr. MacDonald's candid opinion of the Parliamentary Labour Party's decision to appoint an executive, comprising twelve members of the party and three members of the Government, to act as a liaison between the Government and the party as a whole, to watch the progress of business in the House, and to select the party's representatives on the various Select Committees and Standing Committees of the House. It is unquestionably important that close touch should be maintained between the Government and their following, especially when that following contains such varied elements, but the proposed machinery suggests an attitude of suspicion that hardly tends to harmonious working, and the restriction on the Government's right to choose members of Committees is, to say the least of it, unusual. Mr. MacDonald has already got into trouble

over his appointment of Lord Chelmsford (who has now made it clear that he regards himself as "one detached from politics") as First Lord of the Admiralty and of Mr. H. P. Macmillan, K.C., as a non-party Lord Advocate, and there are other signs that some sections of Labour opinion fail to realize the inevitable difficulties of his position. Mr. MacDonald has appealed for the fair play to which he is entitled from the parties in opposition; we hope he will receive the same consideration from his own party.

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The Lancashire cotton industry has been torn with controversy recently over a project to re-establish a scheme of control on the general lines of the old Cotton Control Board scheme which steered the industry successfully through a serious crisis during the war. A few weeks ago, it was reported that a scheme of control (to apply only to the American section of the spinning trade) had been virtually approved by a committee representative of all sections of the industry; and that it only remained to put a few finishing touches upon it. These finishing touches proved too much, however, for the Committee, which decided on Monday to abandon its labours as hopeless. It now appears that the manufacturers (the weavers) have throughout had an intense dislike of the project, which would, of course, by limiting the output of the spinning-mills raise the prices of the yarns they buy. The question is being asked why, having such fundamental objections, they dallied with the scheme for so long. The answer is at once apparent in the decision which the Spinners' Federation have promptly taken to ballot their members with a view to the adoption of drastic short-time (26½ hours per week). The manufacturers were faced with the choice whether they would leave the spinners to curtail their production by the authority of their Federation, in which case the curtailment might be very drastic, but on the other hand might prove largely ineffective, as there would be no "sanctions" behind it and many spinners are outside the Federation; or whether by associating themselves with the control scheme they would try to obtain some power of influencing the degree of the curtailment. Apparently they inclined at first to the latter course, and drew back when it appeared that legal authority might be obtained to enforce the limitations.

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The Interim Report of the Air Mails Committee (Cmd. 2038) is a useful corrective to exaggerated ideas with regard to the immediate future of commercial flying. The Committee lay stress on the limitations imposed by the absence of night flying and of "complete reliability of air services at all times of the year," and also on the handicap arising from the loss of time in ground conveyance to and from the terminal aerodrome. These handicaps specially affect the shorter routes, and the Committee foresee little scope for air mail services within the British Isles, and no great opportunities for expansion in the existing Anglo-Continental services, except as regards parcel mails, where there is a much greater gain in time. They consider the main function of air services under present conditions to be that of a link in a chain of train or steamer communication, as in the proposed Anglo-Scandinavian service via Rotterdam and Malmo, or on the main lines of Imperial communications. The report should be read in connection with the terms of the draft agreement with the new air combine, and strengthens the criticism already made on that agreement as to the absence of any definite provision for the opening up of new services, over longer routes, as a condition of the subsidy.

THE GOVERNMENT AT WORK.

NO one could have expected that the Prime Minister would be in a position last Tuesday to unfold a clear-cut, detailed programme. During the three weeks for which Parliament was adjourned the new Ministers had for the most part to familiarize themselves with the ordinary business of the departments, and to explore the ground of policy in the light of the administrative experience accumulated there. Certain obvious steps, such as the recognition of the Soviet Government, have been promptly taken. For the rest, the Government could do little more this week than "indicate," in Lord Haldane's characteristic phrase, "certain principles on which their minds had converged."

Mr. MacDonald said enough, however, to make it clear that the Government mean, as he said, "to do sober, effective work," and that the idea which found so much favour in Labour circles immediately after the elections, of riding deliberately for a Parliamentary fall, with a view to a prompt dissolution on a propagandist programme, has been definitely abandoned. At the outset Mr. MacDonald wisely placed on record his determination not to go out of office except on a major issue or a direct vote of no-confidence, and his willingness to accept the decision of the House on non-essential amendments. He then endeavoured to dispel the uneasiness which has been caused by Mr. Wheatley's rescission of the Poplar Order; and, if his defence of his colleague's action as a "merely mechanical operation" of no real significance was far from convincing, he clearly meant to convey that any further tendencies towards "Poplarism" will be held in check. The question of the Capital Levy is to be relegated, as was expected, to a Committee for inquiry; indeed, the obnoxious proposal is not even specifically mentioned as the subject-matter of the inquiry; the Committee is to consider "the whole question of the National Debt," and "how far certain forms of taxes enter directly into the cost of production, and hamper the trade of the country." There was no hint of nationalizing anything, or of any fundamental change in the industrial structure. On the contrary, Mr. MacDonald repeatedly urged the importance of restoring "the normal channels of trade," and stressed the dangers of interfering with these normal channels by "extemporized measures which can only be palliatives," oddly describing this as "the old sound Socialist doctrine." There was some similar old sound Socialist doctrine about the desirability of agriculture helping itself, instead of looking to the State for aid. Altogether Mr. MacDonald showed that he recognizes the limits imposed by the composition of the present House of Commons, and will be content to accomplish what he can within them.

The principal themes of the Prime Minister's speech were housing and unemployment. On housing his most noteworthy statement was his confident assertion that where "other Governments have failed, we are going to succeed" with the problem of dilution. Mr. MacDonald saw "no difficulty" over "the guarantee of continuous work over a certain number of years" which the men demand; for "your shortage of houses now is so great that all that is required is to create a programme that will stretch over a certain number of years." "But," he went on,

"that is not all. The workmen perfectly rightly say, 'If we are going to agree to a great inrush of men into the trade in order to meet the convenience of the com-

munity, is it not right that we should ask the community to give us a concurrent guarantee that in the course of the next twelve months or two years that inrush is not going to be used to swamp us completely, reduce our wages, and still further disorganize the trade?' I think that is a perfectly fair position for the workmen to take up."

It thus appears that there are to be two guarantees, the precise nature of which will be awaited with interest. We have no love for the policy of "guarantees" in either the industrial or international sphere; it is of their essence that they carry with them dangers that cannot be fully realized beforehand. But it may prove that the building unions, anxious to facilitate the task of a Labour Cabinet, and none too happy about the somewhat anti-social position they have hitherto assumed, may be content with assurances, sufficiently qualified not to be seriously objectionable. If so, it will be a notable success for the new Government.

The easy optimism of Mr. MacDonald's reference to the "guarantee of continuous work" makes it desirable, however, to emphasize one consideration of fundamental importance. There could be no greater mistake than to attempt to build houses on a scale far in excess of the available capacity of the building industry at the time. It is idle to suppose that anti-trust regulations, however ingenious or however savage, can prevent the prices of materials from rising, if demand heavily outweighs supply. It would be equally impossible to prevent labour costs from rising, whatever understandings had been reached with the unions. The housing programme must compete with building for industrial and other purposes, which will certainly offer the attraction of higher rewards if labour and materials are difficult to obtain. If a rise in the cost of building is to be avoided, the development of the supply of labour and materials must go hand in hand with the housing programme; it must govern not only the number of houses actually erected, but the number envisaged in the plans of the local authorities and the Ministry of Health.

This consideration is vital, of course, to the finance, and therefore to the permanence, of any housing policy. Mr. MacDonald stated that the problem is one of building houses at an average cost of £500 for people who can afford to pay only 9s. a week on the average, or £23 a year, in rent and rates combined. These figures seem to imply a substantial increase in the State subsidies now given. But we agree that in all the circumstances (especially when it is remembered that only a small proportion of the rates which the new houses will bring is required to cover the extra local expenditure on services which their erection will entail) there is a strong case for subsidies on a considerable scale. A relatively small addition to the cost of building would lead to an immense increase in the financial burden, and would inevitably jeopardize the continuance of any scheme. The advice which it has become fashionable to give to the new Government, that it should tackle the housing problem in the same spirit that the 1915 Government tackled munitions, is dangerous advice. That way lies a repetition of the tragi-comedy of the Addison scheme and the Mond extinguisher. The spirit that governed the production of munitions was that of the maximum possible immediate output, regardless of cost. The cost of housing cannot be disregarded; and the production that is important is not so much the production of 1924 as an adequate continuing production over the next two decades.

The same general consideration holds true of the problem of unemployment. The Government will achieve most if they take a long, rather than an emergency view. Trade is now definitely on the mend; and if such obstacles as the threatened dock strike can be averted, there is good reason to hope that the recovery will proceed steadily and continuously. In these circumstances there is everything to be said for avoiding grandiose schemes of State undertakings to absorb the unemployed, which would almost certainly alarm the business world and might thereby nip the trade improvement in the bud. Mr. MacDonald by his insistence on the importance of restoring normal trade channels, and on the dangers of extemporized relief works, has shown that he is fully alive to this consideration. Indeed, as Mr. Baldwin claimed with some justice, his proposals for diminishing unemployment (a more energetic prosecution of Export Credits, Trade Facilities schemes, &c.) read very much like those of his predecessors. It is to be hoped, however, that the Government will make some attempt to explore what can be done to obtain permanent mastery of some of the root causes of unemployment. They might profitably adopt the suggestion put forward last October by the Federation of British Industries of an inquiry into the whole question of monetary policy. This is desirable on every ground now that the Cunliffe policy has broken down, and when the recovery of trade may at any moment make it necessary to sweep away the Treasury Minute limiting the note issue. The belief that the trade cycle is largely a monetary phenomenon, susceptible of a monetary cure, is supported by a sufficient weight both of evidence and authority to deserve a thorough consideration from a Government which regards unemployment as one of its main cares; and we trust that Mr. Snowden will not relegate this matter to the category of those things which must not be hinted at lest the City should be shocked. The dock dispute emphasizes the need for a resolute attempt to grapple with the problem of casual labour—in itself one of the most serious and demoralizing forms of unemployment; and for this, as it happens, no time could be more opportune than the present, when trade is beginning to improve.

The Government have no need to aim at quick returns. The favourable trade outlook, and the signs which have now become really significant of a move towards moderation in French policy, will give them all the prestige of immediate improvement that they require, leaving them free to concentrate on laying sound foundations. The change in French opinion is, indeed, the most remarkable and hopeful event of the month. The Separatist movement is now definitely abandoned. The Paris correspondent of the "Times" reports "a French authority" as declaring that France might be willing to evacuate the Ruhr in return for "equivalent guarantees," and the French Press in chorus observe that the Ruhr is merely a means and not an end. Evidently M. Poincaré has come round to the view that the achievement or the prospect of a settlement would serve him better at the forthcoming French elections than a record of unshaken firmness in a policy the futility of which can no longer be concealed. It is a rare stroke of luck for Mr. MacDonald; and it was naïve and somewhat ungrateful of him to attribute it to the superiority of his friendly letter to the "beastly clever Notes" of Lord Curzon, whose stand over the Palatinate contributed something to the change. But we are still far from a solution; and Mr. MacDonald's capacity for diplomacy is likely to be severely tested in the next few months.

CASUAL LABOUR AND THE DOCK DISPUTE.

THE old dismal matter of casual labour is once more before the public, as it has been many times since Henry Mayhew's first vivid and accurate account of it in 1856. Whether the dockers get the extra two shillings a day for which they are asking, is of quite minor importance as against the question of a guaranteed minimum wage, which has also been raised. It is the latter issue which may make these negotiations, not just one more episode in a perpetual higgling as to a daily rate which bears no definite relation to a weekly wage, but the end of what Sir William Beveridge has rightly called "an insidious form of sweating." No increase of daily wage could put the majority of dockers in a satisfactory position. The talk about the average docker working three days a week gives an unduly favourable impression of the situation. At London and at Liverpool, and probably at other large ports, about two-thirds of the work is done by about one-third of the dockers, whilst the remaining one-third is competed for by a huge fringe of men.

There was a unique opportunity for tackling the problem at the end of the War. The enormous oversupply of labour had been drained off, and, even allowing for the return of those dockers who had been absent on military service, the disproportion between the number of men at the docks and the number of men required at the docks was abnormally low. But nothing was done, and there was a fairly speedy slipping back into the old conditions. The famous Dockers' Inquiry of 1920 was the next occasion when the subject came into prominence. The dockers won a spectacular victory. The recommendations of the Court were a daily wage of sixteen shillings and the recognition of the principle of a guaranteed weekly wage. There was a strong agitation in the ports until the former part of the award was put into force, but there was significantly less impatience about the second part of it. Negotiations were dragging on slowly when the trade slump set in. The only step taken, a very important step truly, and an indispensable preliminary to any effective scheme, was the formation of a register of dockers. This has checked, though it has by no means stopped, that rush to the docks which in former days would have been a sure accompaniment of industrial depression.

And now the dockers are again asking, as in 1920, for a higher daily wage; and they are asking also for the guaranteed weekly minimum. The reply of the employers to the latter demand is that the State ought to help. These are the same employers, it may be noted, who have repeatedly cried "Hands off!" to the Government in past industrial disputes. They cannot be allowed now to transfer their responsibility so lightly. Nor is it accurate to class, as they do, the proposal for a guaranteed minimum wage for dock labourers with proposals for unemployment insurance by industries. The latter proposals, whether they be sound or unsound, come really into a different category. They are intended to provide against fluctuations in employment due to alternations of good and bad trade. The unemployment of the docker is of another character. The trade cycles, whilst affecting it, are minor and not major factors. His trouble is a chronic state of under-employment in good times and in bad times alike, due directly to unsuitable methods of engagement. Before employers can disclaim responsibility for maintaining men they must show that they have so organized their work as to afford fairly steady employment.

It can be done. As a matter of history it has been done from time to time. The London and India Docks Company reduced its proportion of casual labour from 80 per cent. in 1887 to 20 per cent. in 1904; and its successor, the Port of London Authority, has carried the process a good deal further. The shipowners also have shown that they know how to do it when it suits their purpose. In 1912, during a dock strike, three shipping firms in the Albert Docks combined to pay their strike-breakers a weekly wage; the firms were not all busy at once, nor all slack at once, and the men were shifted from quay to quay as they were required. What was done to break a strike could have been done in normal times to spare men misery and demoralization.

Of course, it means taking a considerable amount of trouble and joining with other employers in the necessary organization. No single shipping company, no single wharfinger, could guarantee a week's work, or anything like it, to more than a small proportion of those employed. There has got to be some kind of central agency, responsible for the drafting of the men to that part of the docks where they are required on any particular day, and collecting from the various employers sums which will together make an adequate weekly wage. This means that the foreman will no longer be able to pick anyone he likes from a waiting crowd. If he cannot offer a week's work he must be content to engage his casual labour through a central agency which can do so. It involves corresponding obligations upon the men: they must be prepared, within reasonable limits, to go anywhere they are sent and to do any class of work.

When once it is agreed that there must be reorganization, it is possible to concede the employers' claim that the ports should not be saddled with the maintenance of all those who seek work in them at present. There are two elements in the surplus of labour at the docks. First, there is the difference between the number of men who would be required if the work were properly organized and the number of men actually required at present. For the State to assume responsibility for the maintenance of this surplus would be to condone bad methods of engagement and to encourage their continuance. If a port requires ten thousand men to carry on its work it should provide a decent livelihood for ten thousand men. The shipping industry has been parasitic too long, and men required for intermittent work have had their earnings subsidized from all sorts of public and private sources. The evidence of that is written large in the reports of the old Distress Committees.

But there is a second surplus at the docks. The chance of work for any newcomer has been an attraction to the unfortunates of industry; so that whilst the methods of engagement might necessitate the attendance of forty thousand men to do work for which thirty thousand men should suffice, there might actually be fifty thousand men presenting themselves. Some provision for this extra ten thousand may be regarded quite fairly as a responsibility of the whole community. It is, of course, impossible in practice to separate the two surpluses. The Government should be prepared, therefore, to give assistance, but only on stringent conditions. They must be satisfied that the attempt to decasualize will be genuine, practicable, sustained, and enforced.

If a scheme is to be successful, there will have to be a great deal of educational work and propaganda at its inception and in the early years of it. The Liverpool scheme came to little for lack of that; dockers and foremen combined to wreck it by their apathy or hostility. The leaders of the unions will have to familiarize their members with the purpose and the methods of the proposed scheme, and it is quite likely that there will be a

need for some very plain and courageous speaking. The shipowners will have to make it clear to their foremen that they intend to have the new regulations observed in letter and in spirit. And there must be legal sanctions to prevent the wrecking of any scheme by recalcitrant minorities. Quite apart from any question of financial aid, there is a strong case for statutory regulation of the methods of engagement at the docks: the evils of casual labour may be compared fairly to the dangers to health and safety which have evoked legislation in the past.

The time is not unfavourable to a new effort. It is generally recognized that decasualization schemes are best launched when trade is showing signs of expansion. Public opinion would welcome it. The immediate danger is that through slackness employed and employers may compromise on the matter of the daily wage and shelve once more the admittedly troublesome question of reorganization. The employers are proposing an inquiry. It would seem unnecessary to add another to the long list of investigations, official and unofficial. A fresh inquiry should only be tolerated if it is clearly accepted that its subject is to be *how*, and not *whether*, the dockers are to be assured a decent weekly wage.

H. A. M.

THE PROSPECTS OF GOLD.*

IN an interesting letter, which was published in THE NATION AND THE ATHENÆUM last week, commenting on my article "Gold in 1923," Sir Henry Strakosch writes as follows:—

"America has so far refused—for reasons of her own—to accept from her foreign debtors payment either in goods, services, or securities. She has accepted gold from them, and in doing so has secured a free option to acquire goods, services, and securities in exchange for the gold whenever it happens to suit her."

This passage, which is representative of a widely held opinion, can serve as my text in a further attempt to make clear why I differ from it.

I hold that gold flows to America because America offers in return for it a greater value in commodities than the gold is worth to the rest of the world. As none know better than Sir Henry Strakosch, gold is freely offered for sale in London every week; America is open to buy unlimited quantities of it at an almost fixed price in terms of goods (since, as Sir Henry points out, her price-level has remained admirably stable for two and a half years); whilst the amount which the rest of the world wants on these terms falls far short of the current output. So long as these conditions continue, nothing on earth can prevent gold from flowing to the United States. She does not refuse to accept payment in other forms. She merely rates this particular form of payment at a higher value than the rest of the world does, with the result that it is profitable for the rest of the world to pay in this form rather than in any other.

It is not true, therefore, that she "has secured a free option to acquire goods, services, and securities in exchange for the gold whenever it happens to suit her," if this means "getting as much goods for the gold as she originally gave for it." She can only get rid of the gold by selling it at a sacrifice,—that is to say, by lowering its price in terms of goods.

This she can do in two ways only:—

1. By inflation, thus raising the dollar-prices of goods and, which is the same thing, lowering the commodity-price of gold in the United States; or

*In continuance of an article, "Gold in 1923," published in THE NATION AND THE ATHENÆUM, February 2nd, 1924.

2. By closing her mints to the reception of further gold, thus allowing a fall in the value of gold without involving a corresponding fall in the value of the dollar.

As regards the first way, one trembles to think how much inflation would be required to enable her to get rid of an important proportion of her gold;—something so terrific, I should say, that this expedient may be ruled out of practical politics. Quite likely she will inflate; but not enough, I should anticipate, to lose any large quantity of her gold. Probably, therefore, she is stuck for all eternity with what she has already got, unless she is prepared to clear it at a great sacrifice. Thus her choice really lies between a continuance of the present state of affairs with gold steadily flowing in, more in some years, less in others, and occasionally perhaps a small outflow, and closing her mints as above. I suggested in my original article that in course of time the United States might tire of carrying the ever-growing weight of the Golden Calf, with its vast and vain expense.*

A third way out could only come through the rest of the world raising its relative valuation of gold. Some people think that a general restoration of the gold standard might bring this about. I agree that such might be the case to a certain extent. But even in this event the rest of the world would not want much more gold than it has already, or relieve the United States more than slightly. The more solvent countries of Europe, *e.g.*, Great Britain, France, Sweden, Spain, and Holland, already have enough gold to run a gold standard, if the other conditions were present necessary for the restoration of such a standard; whilst the less solvent, *e.g.*, Germany, Russia, Hungary, could not afford for many years to accumulate large stocks of barren metal.

It is commonly believed that the United States could relieve herself of her redundant gold if her investors would become more willing to lend abroad and to purchase foreign investments. This is a delusion,—unless the new foreign loans were of a purely inflationary character. If Americans were to invest their savings abroad instead of at home, there is no reason why this should cause any drain of gold out of America, any more than in the case of other countries which have invested abroad. If foreign investment always involved a drain of gold, it would have to be confined to gold-producing countries. A drain of gold would only follow if America's foreign loans did not represent real savings and involved an internal inflation; which brings us back to where we started, namely, that America can only get rid of this gold by depreciating the dollar through inflation.

The United States have, in fact, embarked on a vast valorization scheme for the commodity gold, just like other valorization schemes, *e.g.*, that of Brazil for the commodity coffee;—but with much less prospect of the world demand overtaking the world supply. The value of gold depends upon the United States being willing to continue this valorization scheme year after year, regardless of cost. It is for this reason, amongst others, that I declare the future prospects of gold to be precarious; particularly the prospects of gold mined outside the United States. The United States has no sufficient interest in spending £50,000,000 or more each year to absorb the redundant world supplies of a commodity she does not want. For a time she may continue,—partly because "metallist" superstitions cloud men's eyes where the sacred metal is

concerned, partly from the argument of "protecting" the value of the existing stock, the usual argument when top-heavy valorization schemes are getting too expensive; but, surely, not for ever.

There is a further question, just touched on in my previous article, which Sir Henry Strakosch and also Mr. Coutts raised last week in their letters to the Editor,—namely, the effect of a fall in the commodity-value of gold on the position of creditor countries. I do not think that currency policy ought to be determined, one way or the other, by such considerations; for the point arises with every change in the price-level, whatever the cause or the direction of the change may be. But I agree with these correspondents that, when the calculation is made, there are several items to be reckoned on both sides of the account. Nevertheless, this question does not arise, except where foreign loans have been expressly contracted in terms of gold. The United States, it is true, both owes and is owed certain sums in gold. It is not the case with Great Britain. Our loans are in terms of sterling, not of gold; and during the ten years which have elapsed since we were on a gold standard, no suggestion to the contrary has ever arisen. If, indeed, we were proposing to raise the commodity-value of sterling, our creditors might have a grievance in equity; but this is not the intention. If the commodity-value of sterling were to be stabilized near the present level, our debtors would still be repaying us in a currency much less valuable than that in which the debt was originally contracted; and since they pay us in goods and services, this is what matters to them. If, however, it were thought necessary, for this or any other reason, to protect the value of gold by artificial means, it would be much cheaper to buy up the South African mines in order to close them down, rather than to buy up their output year by year in order to bury it. The United States could buy all the mines in Africa and cement them down securely for about twice the sum which they now expend in a single year in purchasing and burying their output. I recommend this programme to the devotees of the gold standard.

J. M. K.

LIFE AND POLITICS

IF it is true that distinguished American journalists hurried over to this country to witness "the revolution," they must have suffered a heavy disappointment. Nothing could have been more mild, or less suggestive of "red ruin and the breaking up of laws," than the advent of the first Labour Government. By general agreement, Mr. MacDonald made an admirable speech, so moderate both in content and spirit that it would not have misbecome the lips of Mr. Asquith or even of Mr. Baldwin. There was not a phrase to alarm anybody, and the allusion to such things as public credit and the limits of public control were couched in terms of respect that would have commanded the approbation of Sir Frederick Banbury himself, had he not gone to "another place." The keynote of the speech was a sober confidence in the future, and an avoidance of all provocative utterances, especially in regard to France, about which Mr. MacDonald's hope tells a most flattering tale. Well, we shall see; but a tolerably long and acute experience of M. Poincaré warns us not to be too expectant, or to place too much reliance upon those exchanges of polite salutations in which that great master of "real politics" excels. If Mr. MacDonald can make good the

* Sir H. Strakosch ignores, in his calculation of the cost to America, the burden of accepting additional gold. His figures represent, not what the gold standard costs America now, but what it would cost them if they were to take my advice and close their mints to new gold.

hope he held out of supplying abundant houses which can be let at 9s. a week, he will have solved one of the most stubborn and urgent problems of government. In this case his difficulty will be with the unions. It is not a question of finance only or primarily. It is a question of labour. The houses simply cannot be built without "dilution," and the idea that the difficulty can be met by suspending works being carried out by public institutions and governing bodies is an evasion of the real issue. It ought to be possible to give the skilled men of the building trades the assurance of abundant work over a series of years, backed by an unemployment insurance scheme to come into operation when the amount of unemployment reaches, say, 4 or 5 per cent. The general impression left by Mr. MacDonald's speech and forecast was expressed by a well-known Liberal when he said, "If he pursues that policy in that spirit I see no reason why he should not stay in for years." But we have yet to hear from his Left wing. His decision not to resign except on a formal and direct challenge is generally approved, but, in the circumstances, it will mean little effective legislation, for no Minister can carry through bills for which his party cannot supply the driving force of votes and which may be riddled in Committee by the Opposition without the fear of creating a Ministerial crisis.

The trouble in the Conservative Party has been smoothed over but not removed. Mr. Baldwin has been duly re-elected, but the discontents remain, and he will disappear when the suitable man and moment arrive. Protection is left *en l'air*, neither positively banned nor positively adopted. It remains the great bone of contention. Sir A. Salvidge and the Lancashire Tories curse it with bell, book, and candle, and Mr. L. S. Amery nails it to the mast as the one thing needful. The issue admits of no compromise, and while it continues to rend the party Toryism can hardly hope to recover the prestige in the country which it lost at the last election.

It is pleasant to have President Coolidge's testimony at the Lincoln banquet this week to the example set by this country in regard to the payment of its debts. The funding operation, he said, was "an exhibition of the highest type of national honour. It showed that the moral standards of the world were going to be maintained." But kind words butter no parsnips, and there is a widespread and growing feeling in this country that it is time that the example we have set should be followed elsewhere, and that we should not be left alone to sustain "the highest type of national honour." So far the only comment that has been made on our action by our debtor nations has been the suggestion that the payment of the debt to America was a piece of perfidious vanity intended to whet the American appetite for more and make things awkward for them. France has shown as little intention to honour her debt to America as she has to honour her debt to us. But while she is not cultivating the goodwill of America by the antiquated method of paying what she owes, she is employing other methods very industriously. "The French propaganda here," writes a well-known English public man, who is at present travelling in the United States, "is monstrous, unceasing, and altogether anti-British. And what do we do? We send advocates—who leave a trail of insolence and whiskey from one coast to the other."

"Ireland," writes a Dublin friend of mine this week, "is getting on well, in a fashion—that is, we are settling down probably to a most reactionary form of

government. But this is certain: our education is growing apace and hatred of England is disappearing. People are commencing to think out problems for themselves. Self-government was never so thoroughly vindicated. The psychological study of the Irish people is extraordinarily illuminating: almost from the moment they get self-government their mental catalepsy ceases, and they become normal human beings. It is one of the most instructive and remarkable lessons in history."

The prompt announcement of President Coolidge that prosecutions both criminal and civil will be taken in connection with the oil scandals, and that no political consideration will be allowed to stand in the way of justice, has done something to turn the blow which the revelations have struck at the Republican cause. Whether the event will have any effect on the Presidential election depends largely on the promptitude and reality of the measures taken against the culprits. President Coolidge, who is practically certain of the Republican nomination, is, of course, personally unaffected, for he did not come into office until long after Doheny and Sinclair had "got away" with their plunder under the friendly eye of the Minister of the Interior. But his party is stained by such unprecedented corruption done in its name, and the affair will certainly count as a "bull" point for the Democrats. Unfortunately, even the Democrats do not escape quite scatheless, for Doheny, whose politics, like those of Biglow's "Candidate" seem to have been "poety gen'ally all round," had taken the precaution of employing the firm of Mr. McAdoo for legal work in connection with his transactions. There is no suggestion of corruption in his case, but informed American opinion takes the view that the incident is enough to turn the scale against Mr. McAdoo's nomination as the Democratic candidate for the Presidency.

Attention was called in these columns last December to the fact that the staff of the National Provincial and Union Bank had been forbidden to participate in any way in party politics. The Bank Officers' Guild protested at that time against this revival of an ancient piece of tyranny, but their letter to the managers of the bank was ignored. In his speech to the shareholders of the bank, however, Sir Harry Goschen (who, I am told, spoke himself on a party platform at the last election) referred to that protest, and said, "We did not consider the letter required any answer," that he had discussed the matter with the representatives of the Staff Association, and "there was no wish to repudiate an agreement to which they had freely subscribed when entering the service." It may be true that some of these bank clerks are willing to forgo their rights of citizenship in the hope of currying favour with their employers, but that does not in any way excuse the imposition of such terms upon them.

It was a happy thought of the new Secretary for India to invite Sir J. C. Bose, the Indian scientist, to give a demonstration of his astonishing discoveries in plant life at the India Office. No one who has seen those demonstrations will ever look at a tree or flower again in the old way, for Professor Bose's revelations show them to be endowed with a life not merely of sensibility but almost of intelligence. It was a tactful act on the part of the Prime Minister to find time to attend the demonstration and to speak; but Mr. Bernard Shaw was not accurate when he said that Mr. MacDonald was the first Premier we had had who had any interest in science. The late Lord Salisbury's hobby, if I remember right, was scientific experiment, and Lord Balfour has long been one of Professor Bose's most fervent admirers.

A. G. G.

THE UNIONIST PARTY MEETING.

(BY ONE WHO WAS NOT THERE.)

THE Official Report of the speeches made at the meeting of the Unionist Party held at the Hotel Cecil on February 11th is a somewhat colourless document. Some things which must have been uppermost in the minds of those present are hardly mentioned therein, and some great statesmen who might have been expected to enlighten their colleagues on that occasion are not reported at all. In these circumstances, I have thought it my duty to follow the example set by the Parliamentary correspondent of the "Times" at Manchester on February 10th and "to reconstruct to a considerable extent" what may have happened. But the "Times" man had the advantage of gathering information from some of those actually present at the meeting of Northern Unionists, whereas I have to rely entirely upon my imagination. Undeterred by this handicap, I will proceed at once with the work of reconstruction.

Mr. Stanley Baldwin, rising amid cries of "B.M.G.," "You mean imports," groans, cheers, and counter-cheers, may have said: "Some of you may be surprised to see me occupying the Chair this afternoon. (Loud and prolonged cheering.) You may have seen it stated in the Press that the Marquis Curzon would preside at this gathering. I have seen it myself. But poor Lord Curzon has suffered a severe disappointment during the last few days, and I understand, moreover, that he wishes to address some remarks to the meeting which could not properly be delivered from the Chair. So perhaps you will bear with me if on this occasion, for the first and, I hope, for the last time, I do the job myself."

"We have met, as you all know, primarily for the purpose of selecting a leader for the great, though somewhat attenuated, party to which we have the honour to belong. On that topic I have very little to say. But with my accustomed honesty (which I think has been even more widely recognized since I led the party to defeat at the polls than it was before) I can and will say this: I never much wanted to be your leader. It was an amusing experience to be Prime Minister for a few months, but I have no particular wish to go through that ordeal again. Leadership in opposition strikes me as an even less attractive proposition. So if you can find somebody else willing to take on the job and can agree amongst yourselves to support him, please do so. I shall be only too glad to return to that obscurity from which I ought never, perhaps, to have emerged. But I recognize that I have let the party down. I meant well, but I let you down. So I'm not going to leave you in the lurch. If you can't find anybody else to pick up the pieces, I'll do it myself, on the distinct understanding that I shall clear out at the first convenient opportunity."

"Our second task this afternoon is to jettison that portion of the party's cargo which caused us to make such very heavy weather during the recent engagement. I refer, of course, to the policy of Protection. And here let me say at once that I would not agree to any modification of our programme in that respect if I had not been honestly convinced, in the course of the election, that Protection itself would be as disastrous for the country as its advocacy has proved to be for the Unionist Party. It is perfectly clear to me now that, in the words of a great Conservative statesman, we have been 'backing the wrong horse.'" (Cries of "No! no!" "Hear, hear!" and interruption.) "I know that it is unusual to make such an admission so soon after the event, and I shall not do so in public. This part of my speech will not be included in the official report of our proceedings. But it is by no means unprecedented for such a conversion to take place. Sir Robert Peel was converted to Free Trade while strenuously upholding the policy of Protection. Mr. Joseph Chamberlain was converted to Protection by Lord Randolph Churchill's Fair Trade campaign, which his arguments did much to destroy. And I have been converted to Free Trade during the last election."

"I thought it only right that we should follow the precedent. . . ."

(The rest of Mr. Baldwin's speech is contained in the Official Report.)

Lord Balfour may have said: "We have all listened with the greatest sympathy and the greatest admiration to the declaration of policy just enunciated by our Leader. Although I have differed profoundly from him on vital issues of policy during the past fifteen months, I think I may claim a peculiar sympathy for him in the position in which he now stands. I, too, have led this great historic party to a resounding, I might almost say unprecedented, defeat. I, too, have been assailed with offensive cries of 'B.M.G.' I, in my time, have also experienced the restless energy and the pugnacious tenacity of a Chamberlain. But there is one respect in which I freely confess that my own experience has differed from that of our Leader. Though it is true that the advocacy of Fiscal Reform contributed to our defeat in 1905 at least as much as it contributed to our recent reverse, and though I certainly dallied at that time, for reasons of a tactical character, with the policy of retaliatory duties, yet I will claim, without fear of contradiction from any well-informed quarter, that I have never been inoculated, as it were, with the full virus of Protectionist doctrine. It is curious to reflect that I may regard myself as being, I will not say singular, but exceptional among Conservatives in that respect. For the student of history will note with interest, if not with dismay, how the germ of fiscal heresy spreads and multiplies itself among our party, with a periodicity recalling that of other familiar scourges of humanity, carrying off from our representation in Parliament, now one-tenth, now one-fifth, and sometimes nearly half of our most vigorous adherents. Much as I may deplore it, I will certainly indulge in no recrimination with regard to that recurring phenomenon. Suffice it to rejoice that the poison has passed more rapidly through our system on this occasion than hitherto, and to applaud the resolution with which our Leader has thrown it off."

"Now you will have observed that in speaking of our Chairman this afternoon I have pointedly referred to him as our Leader. Why have I done that? I will tell you why. But first let me say that if there had been any other person, whether peer or commoner, willing and able to lead this party, and acceptable as leader to a preponderating section of the party, I would gladly have given him my humble support. It is because there is, so far as I am aware, no such person, that I not merely address the Chairman as our Leader, but propose shortly to move a resolution confirming him in that great office."

"Before I do so, let me briefly survey the field from which other candidates might be drawn, and mention, entirely without malice, and I hope without offence of any kind, why I regard those other candidates as ineligible. In the first place, there is my noble friend the Marquis Curzon. (Cheers and laughter.) Why do I not regard the noble Marquis as a suitable leader for the party? It is not because he is a member of the House of Lords. That is a difficulty which would not, in my humble opinion, prove insuperable. It is because, in spite of his great qualities, his very real abilities, his wide experience and his untiring industry—and I will give way to no one in my admiration for my noble friend—there is, nevertheless, something absurd connected with the personality of that eminent statesman which would do infinite harm to our cause in the constituencies if he were our Leader. Then there is Mr. Austen Chamberlain, with whom I have worked very harmoniously in successive Governments, and in whom I recognize many of the qualities of an admirable leader, if he had a following; but I freely confess that I do not, at the present moment, see where that following is to come from. Then, no doubt, there are other names and other outstanding personalities which will at once occur to all of us, but I will not further trespass upon your time by canvassing their qualifications, or their limitations if such there be."

"I take it, if I rightly understood the opening phrases of our Leader's speech. . . ." (The rest of Lord Balfour's speech is contained in the Official Report.)

The Marquis Curzon of Kedleston may have said that he was bound to confess that in spite of the immense powers of mind and gifts of expression which character-

ized Lord Balfour there were some obscurities in his intellectual processes which he (Lord Curzon) was unable to penetrate. What, for instance, Lord Balfour had meant by applying the word "absurd" to his personality was altogether beyond his comprehension.

Turning to more immediate issues, Lord Curzon said that the affairs of the party had been deplorably bungled. He was sorry to use so strong an expression, but felt that it had been richly deserved. He had waived his claim—a well-nigh overwhelming claim—to the office of Prime Minister in order that he might be free to direct the foreign policy of this great Empire, but now, owing to the incompetence and indiscipline of pettifogging politicians, he was deprived of even that limited field for the exercise of his abilities. Even the resignation honours list had been bungled. . . . (The rest of Lord Curzon's speech was rendered inaudible by the sympathetic applause of the audience.)

The remainder of the proceedings would have been as colourless as the Official Report, if an altercation had not arisen between Lords Derby and Birkenhead as to which of them contributed more to the Unionist catastrophe in Lancashire. I understand that this dispute was growing very heated, and that the meeting might have broken up in disorder if Lord Balfour had not risen and assured the combatants that "no reasonable person can doubt for one moment that each of you lost as many votes as you possibly could by any exercise of human ingenuity in the time at your disposal."

LETTERS TO THE EDITOR

THE TREATY OF MUTUAL ASSISTANCE.

SIR,—There is much truth in the contention of Sir Theodore Morison, in *THE NATION AND THE ATHENÆUM* of January 19th, that France wants, above all, security and an actual guarantee of the peace of Europe.

But may I add a word from the point of view of the Central European group to illustrate their outlook? What kind of security does France want? people will say in Germany—the security of a position on equal terms side by side with Germany and the other Powers; or security to remain undisturbed in a position of complete predominance in Europe such as no other Power has ever claimed? There is the rub. What France wants, putting again the German view, is to be able to retain, without danger of interference, an immense power to which she is in no way entitled by virtue of her intrinsic weight in the European system. Moreover, France is in possession of territory which does not belong to her, both in the Ruhr and the Saar. If France retains an army of some ten times the size of the German army, while Europe is at peace, this may be security for France, but it is the utmost insecurity for the rest of Europe, who remain at the mercy of France in every respect. Would the French agree to reduce their forces according to a scale operating impartially for all the nations—also to withdraw from all German territory in return for a definite security? Let Sir Theodore Morison ask his French friends that question!

From the German standpoint there is one great obstacle to all arrangements for guaranteeing peace. They will all be based on the existing territorial position. But Germans will never agree that this position is just. It is in their eyes a violation of the conditions of a stable Europe. The Italian annexation of South Tirol will never be accepted by Germany as a just basis of peace; nor the territorial position of Poland. These things may be consented to, under a sense of injury. But a real peace, resting upon a general sense of justice, cannot come about unless the territorial situation is revised. The German point of view is that the League of Nations is, in the main, an instrument for preserving the territorial spoils of the Allies. I do not see much hope for a real settlement unless the League can become so strong as to be able to redistribute territory according to the wishes of the population. At present no typical German will talk

about the peace of Europe without reminding you that the Allies have forcibly annexed some ten million German-speaking people (this without the Ruhr).

French fear of Germany is genuine; and their need for security a vital problem. But will France agree to revise the Treaty and to restore these ten million people to their fatherland? Then she can easily have real security.—Yours, &c.,

MEYRICK BOOTH.

M.P. AND THE GOVERNMENT.

SIR,—Will you please give my compliments to M.P. and tell him that I have been reading his weekly articles on the House of Commons with much interest, and regret that he should mar them, as he did last Saturday, by dishing up a stale and unprofitable gibe at the legal profession? An observation which classes "the lawyer" with "the arriviste" and "the wealthy ambitious" as "passing over in numbers to what seems now to be the victorious side," seems barely decent when coming from the pen of one belonging, I suppose, to a Party which comprises lawyers such as Mr. Asquith, Lord Buckmaster, and Sir John Simon, to say nothing of Mr. Pringle and a host of others, both eminent and obscure. Lawyers are good, bad, and indifferent, both intellectually and morally; and some of them are sensitive. Readers of Mr. Trevelyan's "Garibaldi and the Thousand" will remember that, if the numbers who embarked upon that supremely heroic and disinterested adventure are classified according to recognized trades and professions, estimates place the lawyers at the top by a long chalk with 150.—Yours, &c.,

ARNOLD D. MCNAIR.

Cambridge, February 11th, 1924.

SIR,—As a Liberal who looks forward with interest and not without sympathy to the performances of our new Government, I should like to say a word of appreciation for the asperities of your brilliant contributor M.P. The tendency to regard any chaff of our new masters as being irreverent and even irreligious seems to me overdone. Charles Lomax, in "Major Barbara," observes that "there may be a certain amount of tosh about the Salvation Army," and I think it is permissible for M.P. to point out the "tosh" involved in some of the claims of Labour. Gentlemen who have sacrificed themselves by taking high office may be slightly exalted in their own esteem, and their lady friends may perceive haloes around their honest heads. If M.P. knocks those haloes a little awry, I don't see why Liberals need be shocked.—Yours, &c.,

C. W.

WAGES IN ADVANCE.

SIR,—I trust that the suggestion made by Mr. Joseph Devine in connection with the housing problem in your issue of February 9th will not be passed over without notice. With a view to obtaining speedily an increased supply of passably trained bricklayers and other mechanics drawn from unemployed adults with a different trade, he suggests that candidates be paid full wages from the start, the Government paying as an advance the excess of what they are paid over what they actually earn. Now this is a form of Socialism without the Socialist menace. That menace is the rapid multiplication of a body of incapables and slackers relying for their support on something which they call the State, really content to lie as a burden on the efficient and industrious. Mr. Devine's proposal, on the other hand, is similar in essence to the principle at the bottom of the People's Banks of Schulze-Delitzsch, a principle afterwards applied in agriculture with such widespread salutary results at the instigation of Raiffeisen. It is based on the encouragement of the efficient and trustworthy.—Yours, &c.,

GEO. G. CHISHOLM.

12, Hallhead Road, Edinburgh.

THE NOBEL PEACE PRIZE.

SIR,—May I claim the favour of a little space?

In connection with the recommendation of Mr. E. D. Morel for the Nobel Peace Prize, a study of the London and Provincial Press produces a profoundly depressing effect.

British journalism used to have a tradition of reserve in the matter of personal attacks, but in this case Mr. Morel seems to have been "thrown to the pack" with orders to tear and worry without mercy.

Nothing is left untouched. His origin is besmirched; his life and work are belittled; he is charged with being a "conchie" (which is untrue); held up to scorn for the imprisonment which followed a purely technical offence; declared to have tried to prevent little Belgium from coming to our aid in our war (*vide* the "Tablet"); and generally is held up as a despicable object.

The chorus would make one despair of journalism, did one not perceive that many of the paragraphs are identical, being obviously the work of one writer. Still, even with this saving knowledge, the taste left in the mouth by a prolonged study is very nasty.

The more pretentious attacks join to the fever of the *curée* a lecture to the Premier and the other signatories of the application—on manners!

This may produce some effect, though, it is to be hoped, not in the direction desired.

For it makes clear that this unbridled attack is aimed also at the Labour Party and its leaders. It is openly stated that the application was signed as a sop for Mr. Morel being left out of the Government. This makes the Labour Party solid with Mr. Morel on this matter.

It is now the turn of the Premier to justify his signature, and to silence, once for all, the howling of the "pack."

It is greatly to be hoped that this will be done, and an appropriate reproof be given to those members of the Press who presume to dictate to him what he may or may not sign. Especially when it is a question of recommending a thoroughly worthy man for such recognition as the Nobel Prize affords; a man also who has worked loyally for, and with, the Premier and his Party.—Yours, &c.,

WM. T. GOODE

London, W.2.

February 7th, 1924.

"BELLO BELLO."

By ALDOUS HUXLEY.

THE word "beautiful" comes rarely to English lips. It is too long, too serious, a little foreign-sounding for our native taste. Uttering those three syllables we seem to be committing ourselves too irrevocably to a serious opinion; and we are chary of that, much too chary. "Beautiful"—it sounds high-brow, it suggests long hair; we are almost ashamed of saying it. It is only on solemn and rather tremendous occasions—on Sundays, so to speak, and not on common days—that an Englishman permits himself to pronounce so dangerous a word. Our ancestors' safer and more English monosyllable, "fair," has sadly come down in the world. The only beautiful thing that we still call fair is the weather. For the rest, it is now all but a term of denigration; it damns with faint praise. Restore to "fair" its original meaning, and Englishmen would no longer be chary of calling beauty by its name. It is only the formidable high-brow word, with its philosophical associations, that we are afraid of. To-day the national epithet of approbation is "nice"—shrilling up in more emotional moments to "lovely." The fair maid of Perth is now a lovely Scotch girl, and many men so beautiful, a nice-looking lot.

More fortunate in this respect than we are, the Italians, when they talk of beauty, suffer from no inhibitions. Their word for "beautiful" is ancient and thoroughly native. *Bello* is as little high-brow as was our "fair." It suggests nothing philosophical or religious. The ghosts of Good and True march dimly behind our Beautiful. But *bello* is a peasant's word of which nobody need be ashamed, even if it does also

happen to be Dante's word. *Bello*—it is the favourite national adjective; no word is oftener uttered. *Bello bello*—they love to double it, to put both barrels, bang! bang! left and right, into the same bird. *Bello bello* and then *bellissimo*, the *coup de grâce* with the butt-end while the bird is still struggling on the ground.

Bello, bellissimo, bellezza: the words beset Italian conversation. From a cornice by Michelangelo to a *bel paese* cheese or the most horrible dribbling baby, everything is beautiful. Is it in England that a political party would select as its battle-cry, "Youth, youth, spring-time of beauty"? But the Fascisti marched on Rome—or mostly, rather, went by train—to the tune of "*Giovinanza, giovinanza, primavera di belle-c-e-za!*" And it would certainly have been difficult to find a set of young men less high-brow than the Fascists, less long-haired—spiritually long-haired, I mean; for physically long-haired the Black Shirts mostly were at that time, though the fashion has changed since then, with frizzy locks rising, perpendicular and stiff, six or seven inches into the air, for the sake, it was said, of looking *piu terribili*. Not since Trafalgar has beauty figured in an English patriotic song, and even here the third person in the trinity, "England, Home and Beauty," seems to have got there more by accident, and because England expected every man to do his duty, than by deliberate design. The exigencies of rhyme are for ever incongruously coupling the Lady Beauty with the stern Daughter of the Voice of God. But in Italian, where every word rhymes with almost every other, the poet's hand is rarely forced, and if the Fascists sing of beauty when they march, it is because they like to, not because there are no other rhymes to "youth."

Since *bello*, then, is the favourite Italian adjective, it would be natural to suppose that beauty was a quality in their surroundings to which the Italians attached great value. That they did so is sufficiently obvious; but that they do now is not, alas! quite so clear. Signor Ugo Ojetti, indeed, has roundly declared that the Italians to-day have, as a people, the worst taste of any in Europe. And certainly, when one looks at the modern *villini* on the outskirts of Italian towns, when one sees the furniture, the fabrics, the pictures and statuary they contain, one can believe that Signor Ojetti may perhaps be right.

For if *bello* is the Italian's favourite adjective, there is another that runs it very close in popularity: *moderno*. The Italians only ecstatically say *bello*; but *moderno* they really mean. And it appears to be impossible for a thing to possess both these qualities, in Italy at any rate, at the same time. Italy, the brand-new country that has only existed since 1870, is still too busy developing her material resources to be practically concerned with the reconciliation of *bello* (as the old Italians understood *bello*) with *moderno*. There are still too many waterfalls to be harnessed, too many power-stations and factories to be built, for the Italians to do much but talk about the *bello*. The people with the oldest and most splendid civilization in Europe are now in some ways younger than the Americans of a generation ago. They have grown into a kind of second boyhood when nothing matters but engines and motor-cars. The vitality, intelligence, and energy of which in the past so much went into the creation of those works of art which, with the hotels, now constitute the necessary plant of the tourist industry, are still there; but they seem to have been deflected into other channels. But perhaps when the country has been made sufficiently *moderno*, its people will find the leisure to think of a new *bellezza*.

It is interesting, meanwhile, to see what does pass for artistically beautiful among the modernities. Signor Ojetti has complained that Italian bad taste is worse

than the bad taste of other countries because it is less consistent and systematic. It is a bad taste of shreds and patches. But it seems to me that all contemporary manifestations of the *bello* in Italy, however different the conventions in terms of which they are executed, have always one thing in common: they are all fundamentally baroque. The model may be Bernini or Mestrovic, the convention may be one of extreme realism or geometrical simplification; it does not matter. In every work one sees that same baroque violence which defeats its own object, the emotionalism which does not move, the straining after effect which achieves nothing, the gesticulating sublime which is ridiculous. *Bello* in the twentieth century is a throaty music, is pages of d'Annunzio's clotted and feverish verbiage. *Bello-cum-moderno* manifests itself in the Victor Emanuel monument in Rome (not half bad, after all, if you leave the statues out, in the theatrical seventeenth-century manner); in the Centro della Città in Florence; in projects for war memorials conceived in the most powerful Munich style. By some strange and malignant fate the Italians, whose *bello* was once so sober and intellectual in its moving passion, seem to have got permanently bogged among the facile emotionalisms and violences of the seventeenth century. Palestrina was once a representative Italian artist; to-day it is Puccini.

There is no reason to suppose that the Italian character has fundamentally changed in recent centuries. The qualities which, in baroque art, reveal themselves as violence and emotionalism, were always there, but kept down, but tempered and severely moulded by the intellect. The most moving works of art are always those in which passion is confined within a severe formal scheme. The artists of the seventeenth century hoped, by throwing off formal restraint, by exploiting technical resources to their utmost limit, to make their works more moving and passionate. They achieved the exact opposite; and, compared with the works of the fifteenth and sixteenth centuries, theirs are uninteresting and even, positively, unexciting. The *bello* of to-day, being still further from the great tradition, is still less interesting.

Why the great tradition, the remains of which persisted, after all, till the end of the eighteenth century, should so miserably have perished in Italy, even as it did in our comparatively benighted England, is a great mystery. Mysterious, too, is the modern Italian tendency to prefer the worst foreign conventions to their own best. The Italian craftsman has all the skill he ever possessed; but if you ask a house-painter to decorate your house for you, his first instinct will be to cover your walls with all the horrible decorative shapes invented in Munich or Vienna during the last five-and-twenty years. But in this the Italian is not unique. The Chinese, it is said, are now ashamed of their ancient art, and prefer a coloured supplement by Mr. Barribal to the finest work of painters ignorant of chiaroscuro and the laws of perspective. That we needs must love the highest when we see it is not, alas! invariably true. When a great tradition fails and grows tired through lack of great men to continue and develop it, when there are only second-rate artists repeating competently what has been done before, then a new and strikingly bad style—the important thing is that it should be striking—will come as a revelation, and we rush, in a delirious Gadarene descent, headlong towards the lowest. It is unlikely that Art Nouveau would have had much success in Rome during the lifetimes of Raphael and Michelangelo. And, conversely, *bello-moderno* will begin to mean something different from baroque emotionalism as soon as a few more artists of genius make their appearance upon the Italian scene.

TRAVELLERS.

THE early rain was over and broken pieces of cloud were sliding askew down a bright sky. The sunlight was dimmed by a mist that was a pledge of a fine day coming. The travellers had left behind the clangour of Philadelphia. The grass and low bushes had netted the mist in gossamer nets. The travellers faced south. They were an American woman and an English-woman mounted gallantly on a Ford car.

A boy of about eighteen stood in the middle of the road with his hand up. Pauline slowed the Ford. "Haven't much space for passengers this trip, son," she said heartily. "But if you want to climb in on top of the baggage come ahead. . . ."

The boy climbed in without speaking. He was a coarse-skinned, heavy boy, and wore a dirty red sweater and a little striped gaudy skull-cap that Southern boys affect. He looked too old for his clothes, a little like an unpassionate Tweedledum. He did not look at Pauline at all. She was too large and too impersonal to be considered by him as a woman at all. He leaned forward with his chin almost on English Barbara's shoulder, and said, "You come a long ways, ma-am?"

"Only from London," said Barbara. "What about you?"

"Say, I bin at London, too. Bum burg. I quit de Navy on'y a coupla days ago. I bin' everywhere."

"Where are you going to now?"

"Say, what d'ye know. . . . I'm gwineter hike around de world."

"Got plenty of money?"

"Nope. Not a cent. But dat don't worry me any. I'm a pefessor of elocuting. Buddy of mine in de Navy learned me to elocute—I kin do it fine."

"But you can't elocute all round the world."

"Sure I can. I'm a whiz at elocuting. I kin do some swell pieces."

"But what about China and India . . . and Arabia . . . and Turkestan . . . and Russia and . . . Czechoslovakia. . . ?"

"I guess dere's surely a bunch of sports in all dem localities dat'll 'preciate good United States elocuting."

"Asia's discouragingly big and backward," said Pauline sepulchrally.

"Say, ma-am, where was you raised? Don't you know de Chinks and de Yids and de Waps and de Hindus and all dem niggers kin all talk American now? I bin everywhere, and I know. I've talked to dozens ofum."

When the travellers paused for luncheon they offered to share their food with the boy if he would give them an example of his art. They sat on a high bank above the road, looking down into a red river set among heaped red forests. Tall, sparse trees stood in a row on their bank, stood rather self-consciously for their portraits, which were pencilled in black shadow on the pale ground at their feet. The wind frustrated Barbara's efforts to light a fire in which to cook their bacon.

"Say, ma-am, you're green," said the boy after watching Barbara for a moment. He lighted the fire himself, but not in the magic manner of the out-of-door connoisseur. He was like a Boy Scout run to seed. They impaled their bacon on sticks and held it in the flame. "Knives and forks not allowed," said Barbara. "We must eat with the naked tooth."

The boy despised them both. He felt obscurely that they were making a game of something serious. "Say, you're green," he said again. "I'm a swell driver. I'll take you anywheres you wanten go s'long as it's my ways."

"We're going across the continent to San Francisco."

"I'll take you to 'Frisco,"

"But we like being green," protested Barbara. "Green is the loveliest colour in the world."

Pauline laughed indulgently and interpreted, "She means we don't need a driver, son. But we'll take you to Annapolis, if you like."

"Annapolis ain't de road to 'Frisco."

"It's our road."

The boy sniffed and began suddenly to recite. The poem began *Mother o' Mine*. It emphasized the fact that—to the poet—his mother was by no means to be cast off or despised because she had ceased, by reason of her age, to take rank with society beauties and other economic units.

Barbara was much surprised by the recitation, but Pauline applauded. "Yes, you may sneer, little cousin from a land of sneers. Of course, it's cheap, but just the same it's good. It's a humble expression of a real and excellent ideal. And that's where you Europeans have to hand it to us Americans. Americans don't have to be ashamed of loving mother and doing right."

Barbara was too polite to say anything more than, "Well, it was beautifully . . . elocuted. Only somehow I don't believe it'll go down in . . . Turkestan. . . ."

"Folks'll be tickled to death to get dat kinda dope anywheres," said the boy complacently. "I kin elocute another highbrow piece done by a heck called Longfellow. An' I kin do a swell comic piece about a backwoods boob hitting N'York an' asking a cop for de hooch."

The boy drove them to Annapolis through Baltimore. They seemed to sink into a lake of smoke as they ran down into Baltimore; a muffled white sun peered on to a featureless city. But late in the evening Annapolis threw round them a thin snare of strung lights among half-seen waters, double strings of pearl lights on the still borders of lakes.

They parted from their driver at Annapolis. He accepted five dollars from Pauline, but not as payment for his driving. "I spoke you on a my swellest pieces," he said as he put the money into his absurd cap. "Well . . . A-guess mebbe I'll run across you folks again somewheres on de road around de world. . . ."

STELLA BENSON.

SCIENCE

WATER POISONING AND SALT POISONING.

By J. B. S. HALDANE.

THE cells of such an animal as a sponge or a sea-anemone are exposed to fluids of rather variable composition, for the water and salts of their environment penetrate all through their bodies. In man the cells are bathed in the plasma or fluid part of the blood, whose composition is very constant. They are far more efficient at their particular functions than those of a simpler animal, but also far more sensitive to changes in their environment. The mammalian cell may be compared to a civilized man, who, if properly fed, housed, and clothed, is far more efficient than a savage, but who can only work under a somewhat artificial and narrowly limited set of conditions.

Most of our bodily activities can be regarded as more or less successful attempts to keep our *milieu intérieur* uniform. The lungs, under the direction of the respiratory centres in the brain, regulate its dissolved gases, the kidneys its content of water and salt, the ductless glands its precious burden of substances controlling the rates of cellular oxidation and growth. And much of the activity of the brain and muscles only serves to enable the gut to maintain the normal level of sugar and other foodstuffs.

The effects on the body of too little foodstuffs or oxygen in the internal environment are well known and fatal; those of an excess (as in diabetes and oxygen poisoning), though rarer, are equally serious. And the actions of small amounts of various foreign bodies are well known to every student of our criminal proceedings. But it is only of late years that attention has been drawn to the exact regulation of salts and water, which in the main undergo no chemical changes in the body, and to the effects of any departure from their normal proportions.

The story of human water poisoning is as follows. A normal man can get rid of water as fast as he drinks it. A man with severe kidney disease rarely drinks more water than he needs, nor is he encouraged to do so. But the kidneys may be paralyzed by other means. An American physician had succeeded, by injecting an extract of the pituitary gland, in temporarily suspending the flow of urine, amounting to some four gallons a day, of a man suffering from diabetes insipidus. But the patient went on drinking water at his normal rate. Rather suddenly he went into convulsions. These were at once relieved by injecting 10 per cent. salt solution into a vein. As the blood plasma in which the corpuscles are carried contains just under 1 per cent. of salt, mainly of the "common" kind, this served to bring its water content back to the normal. Experiments on animals made it clear that too high a proportion of water to salt leads to convulsions and death as inevitably as too high a concentration of strychnine. The most probable explanation is perhaps that certain nerve-cells become sodden and swollen, as do those of our skin during a prolonged bath.

Another series of cases appeared in a very different quarter. Perhaps the hottest place in England is about a mile under Salford, where the coal-miners work in boots and bathing-drawers, and empty the sweat from their boots at lunch—or snapping-time. One man sweated eighteen pounds in the course of a shift, and it is probable that even this figure has been exceeded. This sweat contained about an ounce of salt—twice what the average man consumes in all forms per day. The salt loss was instinctively made up above ground by means of bacon, kippers, salted beer, and the like. And as long as they did not drink more than a quart of water underground, no harm came to the miners. But a man who has sweated nearly two gallons is thirsty, and coal-dust dries the throat, so this amount was often exceeded; and the excess occasionally led to appalling attacks of cramp, often in the stomach, but sometimes in the limbs or back. The victims had taken more water than was needed to adjust the salt concentration in their blood, and the diversion of blood from their kidneys to their muscles and skin was so great that they were unable to excrete the excess. The miners in question were offered a solution of salt in water which was of about the composition of sweat, and would be somewhat unappetizing to the average man. They drank it by quarts and asked for more. And now that it has become their regular beverage underground there is no more cramp, and far less fatigue. It is almost certain that the cramp of stokers, and iron and glass workers, which is known to be due to excessive water-drinking, could be prevented in the same way.

A man who takes an ounce or so of salt without vomiting develops a violent thirst; and if he satisfies it so as to dilute the salt to about the composition of plasma, gets rid of the salt and water rather slowly. Some of the extra fluid accumulates under his skin, and he becomes "puffy" about the eyes and ankles. In certain types of kidney disease salt excretion becomes very difficult, the patient drinks water to keep the composition of his blood nearly constant, and swells up, developing dropsy. More rarely there is little swelling, but the circulatory system appears to suffer from excess of salt. In either case the patient may be very greatly benefited by adopting a diet practically free from salt. To take a concrete instance: a dropsical patient lost twenty-two pounds when placed on a salt-free régime, and regained them within a fortnight when given the

ordinary hospital diet. Such dramatic results, obtained by certain French physicians, led to somewhat exaggerated hopes, and all kinds of kidney disease were treated by depriving the patients of salt, regardless of the fact that the diseased kidney may retain its normal capacity for salt excretion, while unable to get rid of many much more poisonous substances. Moreover, dropsy is not always due to salt retention.

We are not on such sure ground with regard to most of the other salts in the blood, but it is known, for example, that a certain type of spasms in children is associated with a deficiency of lime salts, and can usually be cured by administering them in sufficiently massive doses. One of our chief difficulties in work in this field is the extreme accuracy of the technique required. The calcium content of the blood is one part in twenty thousand. A competent biochemist will not err more than 1 per cent. in his estimation of the calcium in ten cubic centimetres of blood, but the analysis requires some hours, and competent biochemists are very rare.

Moreover, so many of the normal constituents of the blood are present in altered amount in disease that it is often almost impossible to distinguish cause from effect. One of the most hopeful lines in modern experimental medicine is the production of small, but definite, chemical changes in the organism, and the careful recording of their effects. Such experiments bear the same relation to clinical observations as *responsa prudentium* to case law, since they enable us to eliminate such features of the disease as are irrelevant to the problem under consideration. The experimental pathologist is apt to miss the less obtrusive symptoms when working on other animals, and in the long run he is driven to use his own body as an instrument of research. And one is certainly amply rewarded when a chemically simple upset of one's composition brings on the main subjective symptoms (from backache to nightmare) of influenza, or the curious facial and manual distortions of tetany.

No doubt only a small proportion of the symptoms of disease will be found to be due to excess or defect of the normal salt constituents of the body. Attempts to explain the causation or effect the cure of cancer on these lines, though often made, are hardly likely to succeed. But the quantitatively minded biochemist will rather interest himself in substances of known composition and measurable concentration than attempt to follow the behaviour of hormones and immune bodies which are as yet neither chemically defined nor accurately measurable. And the principles both of method and of interpretation which develop from the study of so simple a body as common salt may well guide the biochemist of the future in his studies of the physiological and pathological action of substances yet unknown.

THE DRAMA

RE-ENTER ENGLISH CLASSICAL COMEDY.

Lyric Theatre, Hammersmith: "The Way of the World."

By William Congreve.

FIRST and foremost Mr. Nigel Playfair must be congratulated on his courage in putting on "The Way of the World" "for a run," a state of affairs almost unknown since the end of the eighteenth century.

The great favour with which the piece was received is an encouraging sign of a reviving public taste, which is genuinely anxious to see the works of the great English masters, and not to be invariably put off with pastiche.

Congreve, then, has come out of his obscurity among Stage Societies and Special Performances and once more made his bow to the great public. So much the better for everybody; but if, as is to be hoped, this is the first but by no means the last "appearance" of the Restoration drama on the public stage, Mr. Playfair will, I am certain, not mind the critic taking up certain points with him for discussion, while at the same time urging everyone to go and see the performance.

For some reason or other it has been, until quite recently, generally assumed that during the considerable period that elapsed between the death of the Lord Protector and the birth of Keats the human race practically stopped being human at all to become mere clothes-props and fashion-plates, whose most violent action was a giggle and whose physical energy was exhausted by the "nice conduct of a clouded cane." What awful fribble and frabble we have seen served up to us as a picture of the age that produced Swift and Bolingbroke and Wesley! Mr. Nigel Playfair must be congratulated on cutting with a great deal of bad tradition. But too much, I thought, still remained. The characters, to my mind, looked overdressed. Again, everybody may have curtseyed and bowed to each other with lowest reverence on meeting in the Park in 1700. If so, such conduct would cause no attention. But to-day it seems so grotesque that it is bound to be over-conspicuous unless severely moderated. After all, nine-tenths of the play must be performed with the manners of to-day, and it is no good suddenly throwing in a little archaeology at the unimportant moments. It is silly again to refer to "tay" and "rallery" as if there were something "quaint" about "the past." The dialogue, too, I thought, should have been taken faster and more naturalistically. Again, the plot may be a stupid one, but there it is; and the play should have been acted more rawly round it. A good deal of the setting was, for my taste, over-elaborate, and some of it downright ugly—but that is a personal matter.

Finally, the production, though a great improvement on what has gone before, was not yet satisfactory. But if Mr. Playfair will push his ideas to their logical conclusion he will render an immense service to the English stage.

For the acting, the victory was, as perhaps is inevitable, with the ladies. It would be worth going a hundred miles if only to see Miss Yarde and Miss Evans in the same play. Miss Evans is a splendid Millamant. It is a part in which perhaps it is impossible to give full satisfaction, because Millamant is not merely a woman, but the symbol of everything lovely and unattainable, the queen of day-dreams, the goddess of desire and despair. Everyone clothes her with the qualities of his own ideal mistress. Still, Miss Evans must be as near perfect as possible, and her difficult moments were her best. She was divine in the bargaining scene, and the manner in which she spoke her exquisite soliloquy:—

"My dear Liberty, shall I leave thee? My faithful Solitude, my darling Contemplation, must I bid you, then, Adieu? Ay-h, adieu! My Morning Thoughts, agreeable Wakings, indolent Slumbers, all ye Douceurs, ye Someils du Matin, adieu. I can't do't, 'tis more than impossible,"

positively brought tears to the eyes. No other actress has such a distinguished diction and such naturally graceful gesture. For Miss Yarde the present writer has too often expressed his admiration to say more now than that as Lady Wishfort she was as great as ever. She kept the house in a roar, and succeeded in introducing an element of tragedy into the part. I should, for once, like to see Lady Wishfort played as a haggard and feverish hysteric; but, along other lines, Miss Yarde was perfect.

The gentlemen were not so good, Mr. Nigel Playfair's Witwoud being far the best. Mr. Loraine, as Mirabell, in his desire to avoid insincerity, became beef-witted and failed to live up to his Millamant. Mirabell was certainly very much in love; but still, he had known the Duke of Dorset and Lord Rochester, and should have thrown a good deal more *bel air* into the part. I thought Mr. Scott's Waitwell one of the most finished performances of the evening. When are producers going to give this extremely intelligent young actor a decent part? Whenever I see him act, not only myself, but everybody round me, singles him out for praise; and there the matter rests.

Miss Lanchester's dance was a highly original "turn," which was greatly applauded; and then we began fighting for tickets at Hammersmith, consoled by the reflection that perhaps after all the British theatre is looking up.

FRANCIS BIRRELL.

FROM ALPHA TO OMEGA.

THE campaign of the Musicians' Union, seconded by Sir Alexander Mackenzie, Principal of the Royal Academy of Music, and Sir Hugh Allen, Director of the Royal College of Music, to prevent the Vienna State Opera Company from coming to Covent Garden next May and June, has proved successful. The result is lamentable in every way. There is, if possible, less to be said for a policy of protection in the field of plays, films, books, and music than in that of motor-cars and tinned salmon. Nothing could be more fatal to English music and musicians than to exclude the competition of foreigners, so that, even from the narrowly selfish point of view, the policy of the Musicians' Union and its abettors is short-sighted. And where are the demands of the British National Opera Company to stop? Will it eventually not lay down a law that all the operas as well as the musicians must be British? When that day comes, it will require to have a law that attendance at its performances is compulsory—in the interest of British musicians!

I had missed seeing Miss Clemence Dane's first two plays, and I, therefore, went to see "The Way Things Happen" at the Ambassadors Theatre with hope and curiosity. The play gives one an entertaining evening, but it is impossible to say more for it. I do not agree with the majority of the critics that Miss Dane fails because she has three men on the stage and they are all bounders. After all, one does sometimes meet three bounders in real life, and I can see no reason for laying down an artistic law that every play must contain at least one character who is a gentleman. No, it is not the bounders which prevent the play from rising very high above the ordinary level of British drama, but the fact that it doesn't live up to its title. Mr. Lomax, the villain, is a psychological impossibility, and so is Shirley Pryde, who gives herself to him for one night in order to save the equally impossible Martin. But if the play was disappointing, almost everything was retrieved by the acting. Miss Haidée Wright, as Mrs. Farren, has deservedly received high praise on all sides. But her triumph should not obscure the excellence of the other members of the cast. They were all good, but particularly Miss Olga Lindo managed to maintain just the right note in a difficult part which might so easily have lent itself to exaggeration.

An Exhibition of Paintings and Drawings by Mr. Elliott Seabrooke is being held at the Independent Gallery, 7a, Grafton Street. Mr. Seabrooke is primarily a landscape painter, and it is in landscapes that his feeling for the medium of paint best shows itself; he seems to understand the possibilities of English landscape, and makes use of its great variety of texture and quickly changing subtleties of colour with an assurance which has in it something of the tradition of Crome and Gainsborough. Most of the pictures are of quiet, unambitious subjects, and in these he is at his best; Nos. 13, 14, and 17, for instance, have a great charm of feeling which, if rather romantic, is perfectly sincere. There are, however, one or two more ambitious pictures, in which, it seems, he is attempting something outside his range either of capability or of sympathy. In No. 1, "Winter Landscape," he has been unsuccessful with his colour (as also in "The Red Cliff," No. 15); the bold, mathematical composition of "Surrey Garden," No. 2, is interesting, but a little over-elaborate, too studied, for the treatment of the rest. In his drawings, also mostly landscapes, Mr. Seabrooke shows a confidence, an exact

sense of balance, which make them extremely satisfactory. This exhibition proves him an artist of great sensibility and increasing power.

"Not in Our Stars" at Wyndham's Theatre supplies horror based on the irrational—which is now so much in vogue on the London stage—and a star part for Sir Gerald du Maurier. The play itself is of little interest except as showing the disguise which melodrama has now to assume in order to attract the public. Dressed up in psychic garments, it has now to be obscure as well as improbable, to provide an orgy for the imagination as well as the emotions, to be both pretentious and sensational. But melodrama it remains, however much the highbrows may dispute it, and however Sir Gerald du Maurier may redeem it by his acting. He is always master of his art in every situation, and always completely himself. This play gives him the opportunity for new and varied exhibitions of his skill, and in so far as we have come to see Sir Gerald du Maurier act, we may not be disappointed. If we had hoped to see a good play—that is another matter. The rest of the cast were adequate. Most of them only appear in the first act to dance, sing, give imitations of popular stage favourites, and play Mah Jongg. Miss Cecily Byrne played the heroine with taste and delicacy.

I have been asked by more than one reader whether I would from time to time give a list of some of the principal forthcoming plays, concerts, films, and picture exhibitions. This is my list for next week:—

Sunday, Feb. 17. "The Country Wife," by the Phoenix Society at the Regent Theatre.

Monday, Feb. 18. "Back to Methuselah," at 8.30, at the Court Theatre.

"Anna Christie" (American film) at the Palace Theatre.

Rosé String Quartet, at 3, at the Wigmore Hall.

Wednesday, Feb. 20. Goossens Chamber Concert, at 5.15, at the Æolian Hall.

Elgar's "Dream of Gerontius," London Choral Society, at 8, at Queen's Hall.

Thursday, Feb. 21. Hardy Players in "The Queen of Cornwall" at King George's Hall.

OMICRON.

POETRY

AT HELLBRÜNN—OCTOBER.

THE near-drawn changeless sky, closed in and grey,
Broods o'er the garden, and the turf is still.
The dim lake shines; oppressed the fountains play;
And shadowless weight lies on the wooded hill.

The close-ranked trees rise separate, as if deep
They listened dreaming through the hollow ground,
Each in a single, far-divided sleep,
While few sad leaves fall heedless with no sound.

The marble cherubs in the wavering lake
Stand up more still, as though they held all there,
The trees, the plots, in thrall. Their shadows make
The water clear and hollow as the air.

So still they stand—the statues and the trees,
On the brown path the leaves so moveless lie,
My footfalls stop, and motionless as these
I stand self-tranced between the earth and sky.

The slow dumb afternoon draws in; and dark
The trees rise up, grown heavier is the ground.
And breaking through the silence of the park
Farther the viewless fountain flings its sound.

EDWIN MUIR.

THE WORLD OF BOOKS

MR. MOORE AND THE CRITICS.

THE professional critics seem to me nearly always to be taking Mr. George Moore in the wrong way, and this has been most obviously the case with his latest book "Conversations in Ebury Street" (Heinemann. Two guineas). If you read old numbers of "Punch," you will find that it must have been quite a common thing for Victorian old gentlemen to call a policeman if a small boy put his tongue out at them on the king's highway. That was an idiotic thing to do, and I am tempted to draw from it some profound reflections upon the social psychology of an age which was finally and fitly destroyed by the late war. I doubt whether there is a single old gentleman in London who to-day would pay any attention—far less think of a policeman—if a street-boy put his tongue out, and the result is that there is no small boy in London who ever thinks it worth his while to put his tongue out at old gentlemen.

* * *

Now the first thing to remember about Mr. Moore is that he has in one half of his brain the mentality of the extinct street-boy. He cannot resist being naughty, and his naughtiness takes the form of going to Messrs. Heinemann and getting them to produce a wonderfully chaste-looking volume on hand-made paper, bound in white vellum and Michallet grey paper, and then of putting his tongue out at the professional critics and elderly gentlemen on every other of its immaculate and extremely expensive pages. Whereupon all the critics and old gentlemen pull long faces, summon the literary and critical policemen, and, to Mr. George Moore's obvious delight, read him a solemn lecture. I am not, of course, here referring to Mr. Moore's more blatant naughtinesses, his "bad taste" and calculated improprieties and indiscretions; such things eventually lose their freshness, their interest, and their power of irritating, so that now the old gentlemen have grown as tired of condemning them as have Mr. Moore's admirers of reading them. No one now thrills or shudders, sniffs or sniggers, when Mr. Moore starts on the story of an *amour*, or the private history of one of his mildly distinguished circle of literary and artistic friends—we turn the pages with a more rapid hand and a rather skipping eye, until once more we catch the word "Balzac" or "Hardy" or "Keats."

* * *

But here, again, one should remember and guard against the naughty little boy in the one half of Mr. Moore's brain. It seems to me really to be a little ridiculous to begin calling a policeman because Mr. Moore says that Keats is only "a pussy cat on a sunny lawn," or that Mr. Hardy has only produced "ill-constructed melodramas, feebly written in bad grammar." "Imagine," says my contemporary who fails to conceal his identity under the pseudonym "Affable Hawk," "imagine your feelings if a venerable writer, for whom you had an admiration which prevented you from being visited by the humour of Ham, told you that what strikes him most about Keats is a resemblance to a curled and comfortable cat." Well, I have searched my heart, and I must confess that I find that I feel absolutely nothing at all—which is exactly what I should feel if to-morrow I were to meet an antediluvian street-boy, the relic of a departed age, and he were to put his tongue out at me.

* * *

But there is another side to Mr. Moore and another half of his brain which the critics nowadays

hardly mention, but which can be taken seriously. Somewhere in this book Mr. Moore says: "I cannot write, I can only think." He is, of course, like so many artists and men who are not artists, completely mistaken about his own powers. He cannot think—he has never been able to think—but he can write. If people would only not listen to and worry themselves about what he says, and would give their attention to the way in which he is saying it, they would then observe that he is that very rare thing in English letters—a "pure artist." He is, I think, often extremely amusing; every now and then he shows a sudden gleam of that shrewdness and imagination which is so characteristic of people who cannot think; but these things are accidents, by-products of his real interests and activities, which are concerned with words and form. I do not think that "Conversations in Ebury Street" is among the most successful of Mr. Moore's books—it certainly never reaches the level of the great trilogy of reminiscences or of "Avowals"—but every page of it shows that the writer is an artist in words. And the achievement is both rare and enjoyable—sentences which flow with a rhythm and beauty of their own, forming themselves, under Mr. Moore's patient and anxious guidance, so easily and yet so elaborately into the formal scheme of his paragraphs and the larger pattern of his "Conversations."

* * *

Apart from the evidence of the book itself, Mr. Moore confirms this judgment that his material is not thoughts, but words. Behind even his most pert and perverse critical *obiter dicta* he has a solid foundation, if you once admit the premise, which he has, of course, arrived at instinctively, not by reason, that in literature the only thing which matters is the words and form. "My admiration for Landor is without limit; I place him above Shakespeare. . . ." The judgment is perfectly sound if you accept Mr. Moore's standards of literary excellence. Landor is a "pure artist" and a conscious artist in a sense in which Shakespeare was not; he achieves a formal perfection which Shakespeare never achieves, while into Shakespeare's "art" there enter those fiercely disturbing elements which must distress Mr. Moore as much as they distressed the "pure artists" of the eighteenth century. If Shakespeare distresses Mr. Moore, Mr. Moore's opinion of Mr. Hardy has distressed the critics. But why? If you ignore his naughtinesses, the residual judgment springs quite naturally from his literary taste. Mr. Hardy sinks so low for precisely the same reason that Landor soars so high. Mr. Hardy is sometimes a great writer, sometimes a bad writer, never a great artist—but I doubt whether Mr. Moore could understand the distinction. For him a man must either be an artist, and a conscious artist, or nothing at all. And so he applies to Mr. Hardy a meticulous verbal test which is both amusing and illuminating. And he is perfectly right. From Mr. Moore's point of view, "The Mayor of Casterbridge" is "an ill-constructed melodrama, feebly written in bad grammar." But the illumination which comes from this criticism is reciprocal; Mr. Moore's analysis of Mr. Hardy throws as much light upon Mr. Moore as it does upon Mr. Hardy. If there are terrible pitfalls in the path of a writer who neglects art and grammar, there is a desert of self-complacency and futility into which the "pure artist" may unconsciously wander. "Literature absorbed me," says Mr. Moore, "and mayhap I got as much from it as I should from a collection of Chelsea china and Louis-seize clocks." Many a true word has, unfortunately, been spoken in jest.

LEONARD WOOLF.

REVIEWS

SHELLEY AND SCIENCE.

Shelley and the Unromantics. By OLWEN WARD CAMPBELL. (Methuen. 16s.)

MRS. CAMPBELL'S book is about Shelley, and it is a very good one; neither effusive panegyric, nor shallow patronage, nor pedantic blame, but a serious and passionate essay towards comprehension. But for that very reason the book is as much concerned with the authoress as with the poet. For Shelley raises every question in philosophy and religion, and Mrs. Campbell leaves us in no doubt, not merely as to his views, but as to her own. She has written, in fact, a challenge to contemporary literature, science, and civilization. Such a book is difficult to review fairly since it raises controversies any one of which might fill volumes. And yet it is not, as it so easily might have been, superficial. It needs and deserves to be grappled with. The mere fact that a poet should be treated as Mrs. Campbell treats Shelley will raise in some quarters immediate antagonism. The criticism which regards the subject-matter of painting or sculpture as irrelevant is naturally anxious to extend the same method to poetry. Of painting and sculpture we need not speak. But poetry is part of literature, and literature has for its subject life; the actual concrete facts of life, as in any good novel; and ideas and passions about life, as in any good poetry. Edgar Allan Poe, perhaps, might be treated in abstraction from his subject-matter; but not Dante. And it is not merely because Dante's sense of music and words is more exquisite than he is a greater poet; it is also because his theme is the universe of mediæval Christianity. Mrs. Campbell is certainly right in making Shelley's attitude to life the centre of her treatment, although she well notes that other element in art called form, which must be there if a poem is not to be merely a hitching into verse of prose.

What seems more questionable than all this is the authoress's attitude to "reason," and to the practical activities of life, in particular to politics. Shelley himself, while he drew a distinction, saw no antagonism between these things. He wished to be a practical reformer; his first essays were in politics, and, if he could, he would have liked to be a lawgiver and a statesman. There seems no reason to suppose that he ever abandoned this view, which, if it was absurd, was so only because Shelley had not that kind of gift. He was a poet, and he was not a legislator, still less a politician. But he would, I think, have been surprised at the kind of indignation with which Mrs. Campbell sometimes inveighs against those uses of the mind and spirit. Again, Shelley believed in reason, as few men have believed in it. But Mrs. Campbell seems often to regard this as a mere mistake. Whether Shelley was, in these matters, a good or a bad master would be too long a theme to treat adequately here. But I will record my own impression that he had a hard, clear, sincere mind when he treated, in prose, prose subjects; and that those who depreciate or patronize him, on the ground of a supposed superiority in knowledge and judgment, would find him a tough antagonist if he could visit them at the dead of night. The truth seems to be that Shelley pursued truth through various avenues of approach, and pursued it with a passion to which few philosophers or men of science have attained. He was, of course, a poet, and, at his best, a great one. But he was also, and not by mere error or confusion, a follower of "reason"—I had almost said, out of a naughty desire to shock Mrs. Campbell, a "rationalist."

Mrs. Campbell despises, in this field, the sources of his inspiration, and especially William Godwin. Few characters, certainly, are more unpleasant and even despicable, as every letter Godwin wrote proves. Yet Godwin's book is not despicable. It is a very able example of the deductive method in politics—a method now discredited, more perhaps than it should be, but one having its place, and certain to recur when conditions are favourable to it. For though politics may be, or rather must try to be, on one side a science, on the other, since it deals with values, and so runs back into philosophy and religion, it will always have kinship with those regions of discourse. Plato's "Republic" remains, after two thousand years, a great book; but its method is altogether deductive. Young men—and Shelley was young, as few men have been privileged to be—naturally

turn to such methods; and they do so because they are kindled by certain images of truth of which their elders, as they accumulate concrete knowledge, are apt to lose sight.

We are clearer, now, than Shelley was as to the methods of the human spirit, if we are not clearer about much else; and it is not really a digression from our subject to make some distinctions which underlie the whole discussion of Shelley as Mrs. Campbell conducts it. We have, first, science, which deals with experience, interpreted by logic. This, in Shelley's time, had hardly begun that creeping invasion which now covers the sky like a magician emerging in smoke from his bottle. To Shelley, in his boyhood, science appealed in the same way as to men of the Renaissance; it suggested a key to the mystery of the world, as well as to power over it. But there are no signs that he ever attempted to pursue it into what may be called its prose, that infinite patient research whereby alone it can build up its results. The delightful story, told by Hogg, of the poet running off in excited anticipation to a lecture on geology, and returning dejected, sighing that the discourse had been about "stones, stones, stones," indicates, no doubt, the dreariness of the lecture, but also the incapacity of the young student. In the hundred years that have passed since, science has begun to dominate the whole of life. Mrs. Campbell's attitude towards it is expressed in the following passage: "Science came to the rescue of a century that had failed, and was utterly to fail, in grasping the true significance of its three really constructive poets" (these are Wordsworth, Shelley, and Keats). "Science provided a form of progress, and the alternative to progress is decay. We have travelled a long way since 1820, and almost the whole of that progress has been due to science. But it has been mainly a material progress, and there is a growing doubt in the minds of many people whether, on the whole, we have advanced as far as we have walked." This, perhaps, sums up well the present state of feeling among those (not usually themselves men of science) who reflect on the present course of the world. The war has shown us science destroying men as they have never been destroyed before, and the five years of "peace" have shown it preparing new triumphs in the same direction, while all attempts to make men of science feel responsible for what they are doing seem to fall on stony ground. It remains true, nevertheless, that science is the greatest hope of the world, if it can be rightly directed. Where is the direction to come from?

Philosophy would say, from the fundamental intuitions of Good and Evil, illumined by that study of the consequences of events which, so far as it is possible at all, is a branch of science. Mrs. Campbell would say, from the right use of the "imagination." Are these things the same? They are, at least, not incompatible. For poetry, as Mrs. Campbell conceives it, and as Shelley conceived it, vivifies and makes potent those intuitions either, like a great dramatist, in the complex of concrete life, or, like Shelley or Wordsworth, in simpler but not more abstract material. The "lessons" so taught are not teachable in any other way; for when they are abstracted from their form they droop, like seaweed taken from the water. But in her zeal for this kind of illumination Mrs. Campbell seems unduly to depreciate the other activities of men. Few people, after all, are sensitive to poetry or to any art, unless it be music. But all are amenable, for good or evil, to prose appeals, and all affected, willy-nilly, by political activity. To set these methods against one another, to praise the one and to pour contempt on the others, seems a doubtful service. Men must be saved, if they can be saved, by every method. And what seems to be needed now is not a reaction against science, but its humanizing. Reaction, it must be feared, would lead us back to the brute, not onward to the man.

All this, Mrs. Campbell may possibly feel, is not a review of her book; and certainly it would have been possible to review it very differently. For it is full of meat, unusually full for a book of English criticism. Not only is Shelley's life treated in a sane and interesting way; his art, too, as well as his attitude to life, is discussed and appraised; in particular, and in a really illuminating way, the form of his lyrics. Yet perhaps it is the points we have taken that really most interest the authoress. And since she writes clearly as a reformer herself, she may perhaps forgive a reviewer who has tried to follow her down to her foundations.

G. LOWES DICKINSON.

THE CASE AGAINST ISLAM.

Islam and the Psychology of the Musulman. By ANDRÉ SERVIER. Translated by A. S. MOSS-BLUNDELL. (Chapman & Hall. 15s.)

FEW historical questions are more controversial than the contribution of the Arabs to civilization during their great period. Robert Briffault's "Making of Humanity," a most stimulating book, states the case for the Arabs with great force, maintaining that practically everything attributed to European learned men during the middle ages was plagiarized from the Mahometans. Professor Browne, in his "Literary History of Persia," shows, with immense erudition, how much was achieved under the empire of the Arabs, but shows at the same time that most of the achievements were due to Persians. M. Servier will not have it that anything of real value has been done by Mahometans, but his special enmity is directed against the Arabs. His book is not a work of learning or a dispassionate inquiry, but a political pamphlet, designed to further the interests of French Imperialism. The commonest opinion among historians, so far as one who is not a specialist can judge, seems to be that the Arabs facilitated the arts and sciences, and that the eclipse of Mahometan culture was due to the Turks, first as turbulent Pretorian guards who made the Caliph their puppet, and then as independent conquerors. M. Servier will have none of this. He hardly mentions the part played by the Turks in bringing about the ruin of the Arabian Empire. He states that the stagnation of Islam was brought about by religious fanaticism, and that the Arabs have always been the most fanatical of Mahometan races. The moral drawn in the last chapter is that the Egyptian nationalist movement is a great danger, since it is spreading to the Arab population of French North Africa; that the French ought to deal sternly with the Arabs in that region, but show favour to the Berbers; and that Turkish nationalism deserves encouragement. It seems a pity to drag in bad history to prove these propositions, which are maintained on account of present-day French interests, not because Mahomet permitted polygamy and represented Paradise as quite a pleasant place, nor yet because religious Mahometans at the present day show the same reverence for ancient tradition as is shown by the Catholic Church.

The present reviewer is not a historian, and is therefore content to point out internal inconsistencies in the case as presented by M. Servier. As for Arab fanaticism: he himself relates, what is too well-known to be concealed, that the early Mahometan conquerors, so far from being fanatics, had only pretended to adopt Islam because it gave opportunities for loot. He says of them:—

"These hordes have often been represented as dominated by a superhuman faith and courting death with a sort of fanatical joy, in the hope of gaining Paradise. This is a mistake: with the exception of some few companions of Mahomet who, as it were, formed the staff, and who were animated by sincere convictions, the mob of fighting men had but one idea—loot."

This is no doubt true, and might be made the basis of an argument against the Arabs, but for the danger of its being applied in other parts of the world—for instance, the Ruhr—against other nations. This argument of free-thinking rapacity, however, is quite inconsistent with his main case against the Arabs, summed up in the following words:—

"The Turks are the least Islamized of all Musulman peoples. The Arabs of Arabia, on the contrary, are those who have received its deepest imprint. And naturally so, since Islam is nothing but a secretion of the Arab brain: the dogmatic crystallization of Arab thought. To support the Arabs is, therefore, to give new lustre to Islam, that is to say, to a politico-religious conception of fanaticism and xenophobia."

This conclusion is applied not only to the Arabs of Arabia, but equally to those of Africa. The evidence consists of such facts as that Averrhoes was persecuted in the twelfth century, when Europe, one is to suppose, was the home of free thought.

Even if it were true that the men who did great things in science, mathematics, philosophy, and architecture under Arab dominion were all Greeks, Syrians, Persians, or Spaniards, it would remain the fact that they were far more prolific under the Arabs than when left to themselves. The Greeks under the Byzantine Empire did not accomplish a tithe of what was accomplished in Damascus and Bagdad, nor did the Spaniards under the Romans or the Visigoths give

any promise of the brilliant development which took place in such centres as the university of Cordova. Even in the present day, the Mahometans of the Sudan are certainly not more bigoted or retrograde than the Christians of Abyssinia. Religion is hardly ever a cause of progress or retrogression, since it is always modified to suit the character of the believer. If Abyssinia were the only Christian country in the world, what a case could be made against Christianity!

BERTRAND RUSSELL.

LOVE AND LUCK.

The Fir and the Palm. By ELIZABETH BIBESCO. (Hutchinson. 7s. 6d.)

Rare Luck. By W. PETT RIDGE. (Methuen. 7s. 6d.)

THE opening pages of Princess Bibesco's new novel appear to promise all the thrills of a best-seller. The exquisitely beautiful heroine—untouched as yet by love—the sardonic husband, the young hero with "long, intent, queer grey eyes which could light into a smile that neither man, woman, nor animal had ever resisted," the French butler—"the deputy of fate"—who is perpetually announcing dinner in French, the exotic garden of the still more exotic country house, even the verses of poetry that sustain the characters in the most devastating moments of the drama; we know what it is all going to be about. We like it all the better for that. We hug ourselves and settle a little further into our easy chairs for a glorious two-hours' wallow.

But as we read on we begin to be a little doubtful. We detect a strange but indefinable flavour in our favourite sweetmeat. Can it be that it has not been concocted for the sole purpose of tickling our jaded emotional palate? There is something "sub-acid" about it, to use one of the author's favourite adjectives.

The theme of "The Fir and the Palm" is hackneyed enough. The heroine, Helen, beautiful, attractive, adored by her husband—whose adoration she does not suspect—falls in love for the first time in her life with an egotistical young athlete called Toby and expends on him the passion of an unrequited love. We are led through all the mazes of her enchantment, passion, ecstasy, and inevitable disillusionment. We see the object of her passion, attracted, bored, irritated. But it is all treated with a delicate truthfulness and subtlety that is completely convincing. The eternal conquest of the thin- by the thick-skinned is relentlessly drawn. Perhaps the young man is a trifle too hardly dealt with, but in a novel, at any rate, it will do him no harm. The moral of the affair, if obscure, is impeccable.

The other characters in the book are of little moment, except in so far as they throw light upon the dark places in the love affair of Helen and Toby, and its many complications. They rarely think or talk of any other topic but Love. It pervades lunches at Embassies and afternoons at Ranelagh. The author is intoxicated with the subject, and manages to impart some of her own intoxication to her readers. But when that wears off we begin to feel critical. In our more sober moments we should like a novel to contain something about all the other aspects of life. We should like less epigram and more reflection, less metaphor and more beauty woven into the texture of the story. Such expressions as "Opera box of detachment" and "railway map of bluish veins" do not stimulate, but only irritate the imagination. Fortunately, they are conspicuously absent in the chapters dealing with the relations between Helen and Toby, which are by far the best in the book. Princess Bibesco is capable of making some very penetrating interjections of her own. For instance: "Oh, the blessed gifts of a third person! Depths and security and currents of perfect understanding that are turned by a *tête-à-tête* into pitfalls and uncertainties and jangling misunderstandings." That is so good that we hope for still better things than "The Fir and the Palm" from her pen.

"Rare Luck" is the story of a young London clerk who is unexpectedly left a small fortune. By a mixture of imbecility and enterprise he builds it up into a very large fortune, and then loses it all. His old firm in the City take him back at his old salary, and the story ends as it began.

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London life, and as such it will doubtless appeal to a large public. If we feel that Mr. Pett Ridge sacrifices something of vividness and point in his story to his humorous way of narrating it, this is compensated for by the fact that his humour is necessary for his gentle but penetrating satire upon the sayings and doings of ordinary people. Nearly everyone in "Rare Luck" spends his life chaffing and cheating and "doing someone else in the eye." They are moved by no decent feelings or elementary honesty. We might, perhaps, not care to have such things brought home to us if Mr. Pett Ridge did not save our faces and theirs by making them so humorous.

F. H.

THE PERVERSITY OF MR. BELLOC.

The Contrast. By HILAIRE BELLOC. (Arrowsmith. 12s. 6d.)

It is perhaps unnecessary to mention that Mr. Hilaire Belloc writes extremely well. The fact is indisputable and notorious. The only reason for mentioning it again is that one has to explain why one takes any notice at all of Mr. Belloc's books. In substance they are frequently the most arrant nonsense, but they are so well written that the reader must keep his wits about him if he does not want to be taken in. The thesis of this particular book, for instance, is the obviously absurd one that "the New World is wholly alien to the Old." The absurdity of the statement and the emphasis with which it is repeated "with every adjective and adverb I could use, *alien, foreign, different*: not Europe, not Africa, not the Old World at all," form a trap for the unwary. It is difficult to believe that such nonsense can be put forward with Mr. Belloc's literary skill, unless there is some profound philosophic truth behind it. So one is led on from one mystification to another.

If Mr. Belloc had been content to explain America only, an Englishman who had never been across the Atlantic might have been completely bamboozled. Fortunately for the cause of sanity, he has not been able to refrain from explaining Europe at the same time. This provides an easy clue to the reliability of his judgments. Thus, to illustrate the failure of Americans to understand Europe, he quotes an American as saying: "You don't seem able to clear up the mess you've made over there." This, says Mr. Belloc, "expresses the concrete lack of contact between the two sides of that very wide sea. If you were to say of two men playing chess, 'They don't seem able to get the board into a regular pattern,' that would be an exact parallel." Now when we remember that Mr. Belloc is half a Frenchman, this passage is of some value for the light it throws upon the dangerous form of insanity which officially characterizes his other country at this moment. But as an illustration of the lack of contact between America and Europe as a whole it has no value at all. Fortunately, the Englishmen and, for that matter, the Europeans on the Continent itself, whose minds work like the American critic's, still outnumber the followers of M. Poincaré and Mr. Belloc.

Here is another observation on the same theme:—

"Europe to-day is an exceedingly complex interlocking conflict, wherein one of two cultures, Protestant and Catholic (but each main side subject to innumerable variations and internal divisions), is slowly grappling with the other. From the smallest sub-unit to the largest group, intelligence in Europe to-day is consciously pitted against intelligence, tenacity against tenacity, will against will. It is, if one can use so simple a metaphor for so multiple a thing, a wrestling match, where both antagonists are on the ground, innumerable muscles in each are at play, and neither has yet touched with both shoulders."

It all sounds very profound and philosophical, but when one tries to analyze it, to discern which is the Protestant culture and which the Catholic, to disentangle the main issues of the conflict, it becomes evident that these words, though they are neatly strung together, are meaningless.

One more illustration of the unreliability of Mr. Belloc as a guide for the simple reader must suffice. It is taken from a characteristic footnote on Parliamentary government:—

"To put the matter briefly for American readers, the affair stands thus. An existing body of politicians occupying the 'Front Benches' of the House of Commons, and a corresponding portion in the House of Lords, make a club, out of which alternative Cabinets are formed, 'Conservative,'

'Liberal,' 'Labour,' or what not—the terms are mere labels. This club is renewed by co-optation among its members, and is not affected by the ruck of lesser politicians outside."

This is an old hallucination of Mr. Belloc's, but after Mr. Baldwin has formed a Government from which nearly all the Front Bench politicians of his party were excluded, and after Mr. MacDonald has formed the present Administration, he really ought to recover from it. Meanwhile we shall not seek his assistance in our efforts to understand America.

H. W.

A WHIG'S EXTRACTS.

George III. and the American Revolution. (History in Contemporary Letters.) By F. A. MUMBY. (Constable. 21s.)

"NOTHING," sagely remarked Mr. Canning, "is as misleading as the figures—except the facts." Had he lived to see the latest method of writing history, he might have added "and the extracts." For we can all take our Macaulay with a grain of salt. He stands self-revealed, the enormous partizan, who is never going to let the Tories off if he can help it. There is no nonsense about him, and anyone who is deceived should blame not Lord Macaulay but his own want of wit.

But Mr. Mumby is a far more subtle propagandist, adopting the manner of a slightly worried searcher after truth. "I'm a plain man," we hear him saying. "I have no axe to grind. I have no desire to put myself forward. I'll let the makers of the eighteenth century tell their story themselves. Surely you can't object then." And, to be honest, it is extremely difficult. Mr. Mumby provides a delectable banquet. He has cast his net far and wide, and brought in a miraculously fine draught of fishes. He is far more readable than the ordinary historian, and his book deserves to be widely read. It is only when we have read through it with our eyes starting out of our heads that it suddenly dawns on us that we have heard the story before—and where? With a stab in our heart we realize—in Lord Macaulay, in Sir G. Otto Trevelyan, and the Whig historians. It is they who taught us in order to buoy up their own prejudices that George III. substituted personal for parliamentary government and lost the Colonies as a result. But somehow it did not seem quite so convincing before the arrival of the man with the extracts. The extracts do not tell us more than what the extractor wants us to know. Let us for a moment examine his theses. Did George III. substitute personal for representative government? Did that entail the loss of the American Colonies, or would they have been lost anyhow? Mr. Mumby himself expresses no opinion, but his extracts thunder his answer for him. Still it is ridiculous to pretend that George III. destroyed representative government; he merely substituted his own Government for that of the Bedford, the Rockingham, or other Whigs. Nobody except Chatham appears to have noticed this. He alone refers to the "rotten part of the Constitution which cannot survive a century," and bases his objection to the taxing of the Colonies on the unrepresentative character of English institutions. He could complain with justice of George III.'s manipulation of Parliament; the Old Whigs could not.

George III. certainly lost the American Colonies. Would the Old Whigs or any other Whigs have saved them? This is, to say the least of it, extremely doubtful. The American Colonies had become too powerful to be contented with a subordinate position. You might undo the Stamp Act. You might abandon the tea duty. You might bear the whole burden of Imperial defence without asking America to contribute a farthing; the problem would one day inevitably crop up again. Eventually neither Burke nor Chatham nor anyone else could have prevented it. Benjamin Franklin had taken the measure of England, and knew exactly where he was going. Surely it is time even for a maker of extracts to abandon the gospel of the Whigs, though, in the excellent language of Mr. Fortescue, "it is easy to assume that but for George III. the American Colonies would never have been lost. It saves a good deal of trouble, it is soothing to the national conscience, and it is highly flattering to the citizens of the American Republic."

It is really difficult for anyone whose mind has been exasperated by the easy assumptions of the Whig historians not to go too far in the opposite direction. There is

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something very agreeable in the spectacle of the young King and his adroit tutor Bute gradually cheating the old place-hunters out of their idle emoluments. Chatham has been severely abused for his aloofness in the quarrel, and certainly Mr. Mumby does not spare him. But perhaps his aloofness had some significance. He saw the rottenness of the Constitution, and could not but despise the blatant nonsense talked by the Whigs. Perhaps he felt for George III., who supplanted him, some of that kindly tolerance Giolitti has shown to Mussolini.

Mr. Mumby accepts the view that the American Colonists were all angels of light. He is still much in the same mind as the French Liberals of pre-Revolution days. A detached essayist, Mr. Stebbing, has wittily written of Franklin: "His New England astuteness seemed to Parisian courtiers patriarchal innocence. His naïve stories and illustrations, which a thousand admirers were ready to translate and repeat in every circle of the town, were as bracing as quinine. His very costume, his hair hanging, his spectacles on his nose, his white hose, and white hat under his arm," in the midst of absurd perukes and brocaded suits, came like a revelation of free nature to the slaves of fashion. He became, to his own amusement, the idol of Paris—and a hundred and thirty years afterwards he plays the same game on Mr. Mumby.

We may recognize the ultimate justice, in fact the absolute inevitability, of America's demand for independence without claiming for Americans that they are born without original sin. Mr. Mumby quotes a very sensible letter from an English officer quartered in saintly, puritan Boston, which had so recently been "black with unexpected tea," to the delight of all good Liberals the world over, but particularly to the American tea-merchants, for the tea was coming in cheap:—

"The inhabitants of this colony retain the civil and religious principles brought over by their forefathers in the reign of Charles I., and are at least a hundred years behind the people of England in every refinement. With the most austere show of devotion, they are devoid of every principle of common honesty, and reckoned the most arrant cheats and hypocrites upon the whole continent of America. The women are very handsome, but, like old Mother Eve, very frail: our camp has been as well supplied in that way since we have been on Boston Common as if our tents were pitched on Blackheath. . . . The saints here begin to relish much the money we spend among them, and I believe, notwithstanding all their noise, would be very sorry to part with us."

This straightforward young man seems to exasperate Mr. Mumby. But it is not such a bad description of the human race, to which Americans certainly belong to-day, and belonged perhaps even in the year immediately preceding the War of Independence.

F. B.

"THAT CRITICALL WARR."

Studies in the Genesis of Romantic Theory in the Eighteenth Century. By J. G. ROBERTSON. (Cambridge University Press. 12s. 6d.)

THE late seventeenth and eighteenth centuries, reeling from the fury of the Battle of the Ancients and the Moderns, staggering under the blows of Boileau, Bouhours, Rymer, and Pope, discovered that the object of art was to depict the true, the beautiful, and the good. The late eighteenth and early nineteenth centuries, tossed by the passions of the French Revolution, seduced by the flashing wings of "Lyrical Ballads," found out that the end of art was to reveal the good, the beautiful, and the true. In both cases this was to be done by the simple expedient of "following Nature." Yet "The Ancient Mariner" is not like "Alexander's Feast," so it would seem that even if æsthetic philosophy does not change, man's conception of Nature does.

Professor Robertson, however, has a touching faith that it is the æstheticians who change the course of art, as a man might argue that it was Harvey's discoveries that caused the blood to circulate. That is the root error of all such works as this. But so long as criticism concerns itself with what art ought to be instead of patiently examining the "go of it," so long will wars centre about the unities, and battles be fought among the cloudy ramparts of neo-Platonism. Nevertheless, we need not agree with Sir William Temple that "controversies that can never end had better perhaps never begin"—for the arguments that

are worth while are perennial, and help to make life less dull.

The object of this book is to prove that the "Imagination" which overthrew the "tyranny of Reason," and so brought forth the Romantic Revival, was due to the æsthetic philosophers of Italy who flourished in the early eighteenth century. The notion that art reflects the life, criticism the thought of an epoch, is repugnant to Professor Robertson: he is always at pains "satisfactorily to account for the originality" of authors by delving into the writings of predecessors! As regards influence, nothing can ever be proved, as is known to everyone who has done any work on the subject. Indeed, in the end, Professor Robertson virtually abandons his position, especially where England is concerned, contenting himself with suggesting that Addison—that least original of thinkers—may have read Muratori. But to trace back currents of thought is a profitless task; each age takes from the last just so much as will suit it. The different elements are always with us. "Pride and Prejudice" lies like a worm in the bud of Castles of Otranto and Mysteries of Udolpho, and we quarrel about the same things under different names. The dispensation under which we live—a Renaissance, a scientific age of order, a French or Industrial Revolution—determines which element has for the moment the most importance. Certainly, the "discoveries" of Professor Robertson's philosophers—except, perhaps, those of Vico, whom he treats too scantily—may be found in Temple or Dennis, and we might ourselves, after his manner, trace back the "Revival" freedom to that most eminent classicist Jonson, who wrote that "rules are ever of lesse force and vauw than experiments."

Nevertheless, the "influence" thesis is as good a peg as any upon which to hang a coat of studies, and Professor Robertson has given us a learned piece of investigation. His accounts of Gravina, Muratori, Martelli, Maffei, and others are admirably compressed and, in spite of a certain pedantry, quietly entertaining. Æsthetic combat followed much the same course in Italy as it did in France and England; the authorities appealed to were identical, though the illustrations were necessarily more local. Italy began late, being only stimulated to this somewhat arid activity by the attack of Bouhours. It resolved itself largely into what might be called the Battle of the Hippogriffs. Was it, or was it not, in accordance with the *utile et dulce*, with *buon gusto*, decorum, and truth to Nature, to introduce these amiable beasts into a poem? The battle, however, had a somewhat peculiar character. "There were, in fact, two controversies which incontinently cut across each other in Italy; in the 'ancient versus modern' controversy, the triumph of the 'modern' side was in the best interests of progress; but in the national controversy of French versus Italian taste, the latter case was better maintained by a championship of the 'ancient' side." Hence the critics were confused, as were our own classicists by the existence of Shakespeare and Cowley.

The period covered by Professor Robertson is roughly from 1670 to 1760—from Dryden to J. E. Schlegel, a period which in Italian development corresponds with ours from Bacon to Shaftesbury. A chronological table (not quite accurate) of births, deaths, and principal works in Italy, England, France, and Germany, enables us to form a tolerably complete picture, and the book should be valuable not only to those interested in Italian literature, but to all who are curious about the general history of æsthetics, or who take a pleasure even in the futilities of thought, so long as they are passionate and erudite.

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ABOUT fourteen years ago Adler broke away from the Psycho-analytic school and founded his system of "Individual Psychology." In it he rejected Freud's theory of the importance of sex in the ætiology of the psycho-neuroses, and set up the aggressive and self-assertive instincts as the main-spring of human behaviour. He called this group of tendencies "The Masculine Protest" ("der männliche Protest").

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The secret of the anthology, after all, is to secure atmosphere. Mr. W. H. Davies, in his *Shorter Lyrics of the Twentieth Century*, has seen this, and fulfilled in a remarkable way all the conditions it implies.—*Times Literary Supplement*.

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has some primary organic defect, such as a squint or a crooked spine, which handicaps him with other children and gives him a consciousness of inferiority; or this sense of inferiority comes from his seeing a brother or a sister preferred to him by his parents, or simply from his not getting his own way enough. Indeed, a child can hardly avoid finding himself in a position of inferiority to the grown-up people who manage his life. His whole existence now becomes an antagonistic reaction to this hated position, and a striving for power and domination, a desire to be "on top" ("Obensein"); and he continues this struggle throughout his life. Every abnormality of the mind is thus an overcompensation of some initial defect and the expression of exaggerated ambition. The sexual implications of the "masculine protest" are accidental and partly due to the low social standing of woman. The child soon begins to observe that men are richer, cleverer, and stronger than women, and it learns to identify "male" with "superior" and "female" with "inferior." It desires to be masculine in no other way than as it desires every other means to greatness.

Adler's theory is open to much criticism. To begin with, he does not show that his assumption of an infantile organic or environmental disability necessarily means anything more than that all children are small and weak; in which case it does not explain why some grow up normal. If he does mean that there is always some quite particular disability in the infancy of the future neurotic, it is by no means certain that this is true. Moreover, he classes under his "given" defects such things as awkwardness, stammering, enuresis, &c., and these are more often than not complete symptoms in themselves—not the cause of trouble but the finished product of a pathological mental condition. A more serious objection is that he does not make clear what he means by the "sense of inferiority," although that idea is the foundation of his doctrine. In many passages he includes under it "certain tendencies to submission" and "stirrings of obedience" in the child, which have to be overcome; so that it looks as though the child does not only want to be strong and grand; it sometimes wants to be taken charge of and ruled. But as soon as these passive instincts are admitted as part of the mind, Adler's position is weakened. "Feminine" desires such as these will clearly interfere with the "masculine protest," and we must be prepared to meet a not impossible "feminine protest" working in some dark corner of the mind against the universal assertion of the masculine attitude.

Concerning the "motives" of mental disorders, Adler believes that there is only the one of ambition. The neurotic patient desires to get consideration and special privileges from the people about him, and in this he usually succeeds. That is his ambition. Now it has been long since recognized that the neurotic does get some such compensation for his illness, and clings to it as a mitigation of the sufferings he cannot escape. Thus it is a factor in the maintenance of his neurosis, though not in its development. And, indeed, what most psycho-neurotics lose in the way of freedom of action and power and self-esteem through their symptoms is scarcely made up for by the extra attentions they get from their friends and relatives; especially if we consider that the gain must be of the "being on top" sort, and not the mere "feminine" luxury of being nursed and pitied.

There is further the large class of persons to be considered who get conscious satisfaction from being oppressed and cruelly treated. The exercise of power leaves them cold; their pleasures range from a refined delight in moral self-abasement to an indulgence in the wildest phantasies of being whipped and tortured. What is their "masculine protest" doing? Adler brushes away this difficulty by calling all such tendencies "pseudo-masochistic" and "not real," because they are only a trick to earn praise and distinction for the person on account of his docile disposition and his willingness to serve others.

The fact is that Adler cannot account satisfactorily for the manifold phenomena of normal and abnormal psychology with the limited theoretical tools at his disposal. In his description of the specific mental affections, for instance, he gives no account of their structure and differentiation; and his theory of dreams as the dreamer's preparation to master a future situation simply does not cover the field of dream-material. His "masculine protest" more or less coincides with certain aspects of the "narcissistic" instincts of the Freudian school, as well as with the more widely recognized

instincts of aggression and self-preservation; and they do undoubtedly play a considerable part in the ætiology of mental disorders. But they cannot conceivably be the only cause or always the principal one; that will depend upon their actual intensity and their relation to the rest of the tendencies that are operative in the mind of the individual.

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The Arms of Apperley. By BENJAMIN QUATTIT. (Onseley. 7s. 6d.)

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[illegible]

should appear on the Speaker's table in the place of the mace." Eventually Apperley dies, and Marrable is blown up by an ingenious trap set by Apperley, while Frank and Ann retire feebly to the suburbs. Mr. Quatit must move about a little among human beings before he tries again.

The Barge of Haunted Lives. By J. AUBREY TYSON. (Mills & Boon, 7s. 6d.)

This is an ingenious book. The author is anxious to make our flesh creep and takes us with due solemnity to a barge owned by an eccentric millionaire, whose hobby it is to entertain and help people whose past has been overshadowed by some terrible experience. There we find nine individuals who very, very leisurely tell us in turn the story of their lives, and each story is cleverly contrived to have a bearing on the final *dénouement*. It is all rather exhausting, and the wild improbabilities of the plot need a style a little different from this, which is a fair sample:

"Tortured as I was by outraged love and the bitter pangs of a proud woman's humiliation, the journey homeward seemed like one long nightmare: . . . During the month that followed my return, I saw little of my stepfather. Most of this time, a prey to bitter reflections, I remained in my room, reading or engaged in needlework."

Could anything be more genteel?

BOOKS IN BRIEF

Unpublished Letters of Matthew Arnold. Edited by ARNOLD WHITBRIDGE. (Yale University Press, and Milford. 6s. 6d.)

Even in these few letters Matthew Arnold stands out like a bust of the best Greek period, restrained, clear cut, aristocratic. It is both a relief and a surprise to come upon somebody who believed in the sovereignty of the intellect, was not afraid to quote Aristotle in his private letters, and remained aloof from the squabbles and scandals of his contemporaries. One or two remarks upon his own poetry are of considerable interest. Writing about 1849, after "The Strayed Reveller" had appeared, he says: "But as I feel rather as a reformer in poetical matters, I am glad of this opposition. If I have health and opportunity to go on, I will shake the present methods until they go down, see if I don't. More and more I feel bent against the modern English habit (too much encouraged by Wordsworth) of using poetry as a channel for thinking aloud, instead of making anything." He travels in France, and reflects: "This is the worst of aristocracies, with all their merits—they are inaccessible to ideas. . . . But our people's strong point is not intellectual *coup d'œil* any more than our aristocracy's, and this is our worst chance." In short, Matthew Arnold is Matthew Arnold, and that, we cannot help thinking, was a very good thing to be.

A Book of English Prosody. By SYDNEY GREW. (Grant Richards. 6s.)

Love and religion, says Doralice in the play, have but one thing to trust to, and that is a good sound faith. One is tempted to believe it is the same with English prosody. But it is essential to declare one's faith with clarity, and since Mr. Grew wrote his book in a fortnight, it is not surprising that it is often hard to see what he would be at. He appears to follow Mr. Saintsbury, but waveringly, and at a distance, pausing to shake hands with Mr. Omond, casting a doubtful look at Mr. Thomson. Thus he worse confounds the confusion already existing between accentual and time values with a system of musical bars of unequal length and varying time. The book is intended for "young people who have not studied the subject from other books." They are not likely to be attracted to it by this one; and when they are told (Chapter X.) that "once the beauty and significance of words and phrases are perceived, the adjustment of time is effected by us without conscious thought," they are likely to take the hint and incontinently throw up the sponge.

Arthur Yates: an Autobiography. Written in Collaboration with BRUCE BLUNT. (Grant Richards. 20s.)

" . . . his two pet aversions were Bolshevism and motor traffic," writes Mr. Blunt, in his introduction to Mr. Yates's autobiography. Arthur Yates rode a race with a broken collar-bone, trained Cloister, never betted, roared with laughter when his stable-boys took a toss, dosed them liberally with brandy, bred outlandish beasts in his grounds; and could never help tipping a man down on his luck. The portrait, which is on familiar lines, is very simply drawn, but then Mr. Yates was not a very complicated person.

APPOINTMENTS VACANT AND WANTED.

UNIVERSITY OF LONDON.—The Senate invite applications for the University Chair of Education, tenable at King's College. Salary, £800 a year. Applications (12 copies) must be received not later than first post on February 28th, 1924, by the Academic Registrar, University of London, South Kensington, S.W. 7, from whom further particulars may be obtained.

BOROUGH OF WATFORD.

PUBLIC LIBRARY.

APPLICATIONS are invited for the post of **LIBRARY ASSISTANT.**

Salary, £150 per annum, rising by annual increments of £10 to £200 per annum.

Public Library experience essential. Preference will be given to one who holds Library Association Certificates and has a working knowledge of Dewey and open access.

Applications, stating age, qualifications and experience, accompanied by copies of three recent testimonials must be sent, addressed to the Borough Librarian, Public Library, Watford, endorsed "Library Assistant," on or before Wednesday, February 27th, 1924.

W. HUDSON,
Town Clerk.

CITY AND ROYAL BURGH OF DUNFERMLINE. CARNEGIE PUBLIC LIBRARIES.

MALE ASSISTANT LIBRARIAN wanted as a Member of the Public Library Staff under the Chief Librarian, principally to take charge of the administration connected with three Institute Libraries and one Branch Library. Applicants should have had experience in book selection, cataloguing, and classification. Preference will be given to men under 35 years of age.

SALARY, £200 per annum, rising by five annual increments of £20 to £300.

Applications, stating qualifications and experience, and accompanied by one copy of testimonials, should be lodged with the subscriber on or before 27th inst.

ANDREW SHEARER,
Town Clerk,
Clerk to Dunfermline Public
Library Committee.

City Chambers, Dunfermline.
February 11th, 1924.

PUBLISHING.—Partnership for purchase in firm of Book-Publishers.—Apply Box 146, THE NATION & THE ATHENÆUM, 5, John Street, Adelphi.

LECTURES.

UNIVERSITY OF LONDON.

THE following Lectures have been arranged:—

Two Public Lectures on "BRITAIN ON THE EVE OF THE RAILWAY AGE," by DR. J. H. CLAPHAM, Litt.D., C.B.E. (Lecturer in History and Economics, King's College, Cambridge), at the LONDON SCHOOL OF ECONOMICS (Houghton Street, Aldwych, W.C.2), on THURSDAYS, FEBRUARY 21st and 28th, 1924, at 5 p.m. At the First Lecture the Chair will be taken by Sir William Acworth, K.C.S.I. (Member of the Council of the Royal Economic Society).

A Course of Three Lectures on "THE GEOGRAPHY OF THE UNITED STATES, REGIONAL AND NATIONAL," by PROFESSOR A. P. BRIGHAM (Professor of Geography in Colgate University, Hamilton, N.Y.), at the LONDON SCHOOL OF ECONOMICS (Houghton Street, Aldwych, W.C.2), on FRIDAY, FEBRUARY 22nd; TUESDAY, FEBRUARY 26th; and FRIDAY, FEBRUARY 29th, at 5 p.m. At the First Lecture the Chair will be taken by SIR HALFORD J. MACKINDER, M.A. (Professor of Geography in the University).

Two Public Lectures on "CRIMINAL LAW," by SIR HARRY STEPHEN, LL.M., at UNIVERSITY COLLEGE, LONDON (Gower Street, W.C.1), on MONDAYS, FEBRUARY 25th and MARCH 3rd, at 5.30 p.m. The Chair at the First Lecture will be taken by THE LORD CHIEF JUSTICE OF ENGLAND (The Right Hon. Lord Hewart), and at the Second Lecture by the Hon. Mr. Justice Rowlatt, K.C.S.I.

ADMISSION TO THE ABOVE LECTURES IS FREE, WITHOUT TICKET. Syllabuses may be obtained on application to the undersigned.

EDWIN DELLER,
Academic Registrar.

MEETING.

CHRISTIANITY IN CITIZENSHIP.

CENTRAL HALL WESTMINSTER.

Feb. 20th. Can Education Give Us Peace? Edmund G. A. Holmes
Doors open 7.30 Lectures at 8. Admission Free.

Reserved seats: Numbered, 2/6; unnumbered, 1/- each lecture.
The London Union of the F.O.R., 17, Red Lion Square, W.C.1.

POLITICAL.

CANDIDATES for the position of AGENT to Halifax Liberal Association are invited to apply for the position; salary, £300 per annum. Applications to be made to the Hon. Secretary, Mr. F. Slater, J.P., 15, Waterhouse-street, Halifax.

MISCELLANEOUS.

BOOKPLATES.—Original exclusive designs from 2 gns.—Write OSBORNES, Artist-Engravers, 27, Eastcastle Street, London, W.1.

IF sufferers from rheumatism or gout will write to Whiteways, Whimble, Devon, for particulars of their "Woodbine Blend" Dry Cyder, it will be to their advantage.

SOUTH METROPOLITAN GAS COMPANY.

STEADY AND CONTINUOUS PROGRESS.

The ordinary general meeting of the proprietors of the South Metropolitan Gas Co. was held on the 13th inst. at the Cannon Street Hotel, E.C., Dr. Charles Carpenter, M.Inst.C.E. (the president), presiding, said:—

Ladies and Gentlemen,—A perusal of the report will have prepared you for what must be the dominant note of the remarks I propose to make this afternoon, namely, that while the year has been for us an uneventful one, its record is indicative of a steady and continued progress. The chief causes which have contributed to this result are twofold. In the first place there has been a resumption in South London of activity in house building which has been, more or less, in abeyance by reason of the war and the unsettled condition of affairs following therefrom. I mention this first as a factor in our increased business because it is, I think, generally recognised as a sign of returning prosperity among the community at large, as well as being indicative of a revival of trade. But the number of new houses built, and, therefore, of fresh consumers for gas, does not nearly account for the increase in our output.

This is due largely to the very satisfactory fact that our existing consumers are depending more and more upon gaseous energy for such of their varied requirements as it is particularly—I had almost said uniquely—fitted to supply. This is not only true of the slot meter consumers, whose average consumption slowly but steadily improves, but it applies equally to those consumers supplied through ordinary meters.

The other qualification for popularity is undoubtedly that of cheapness. This has been our constant aim, and, combined with the maintenance of a high and constant quality, may be stated to form the main basis of our general policy towards our customers.

In no sphere of usefulness is this more increasingly recognised than it is by the users of gas for industrial purposes, which, while still but a small proportion of our business, is an extending one in many ways.

Not the least important factor in this connection is the simplicity of control and regularity of service provided by a supply of gas. With raw fuel it is next to impossible for the user to obtain supplies of regular quality. As large buyers of coal ourselves, we are in daily touch with this difficulty, and are only able to maintain even a moderate degree of quality by unremitting watchfulness in the coal fields, and with a thoroughness which would be impossible for ordinary users to apply. But the gasworks' function is to take the irregularly constituted, both as regards energy and purity, raw fuel, and convert it into a product of constant potentiality and uniform purity. This fact alone enormously simplifies the operations of the manufacturer in many industries, where, with a known expenditure on terms, he can always rely upon obtaining definite results, and not infrequently with little or no specialised attention.

There is another interesting application of gas, but to commerce rather than to industry, which I must not overlook, and that is of high pressure street lighting. At one time I should have said that the finest examples of this were to be found in certain West-end thoroughfares, but that is not the case to-day. There are now some thousands of these lamps in use in various South London shopping centres, where they have, it seems, become indispensable to business.

While on the subject of outdoor lighting it would be unfair were I not to refer to the excellent work carried out by our Public Lighting Department in the illumination of the streets. It had its vicissitudes during, and subsequent to, the war, but I am happy to say that it has not only reached, but has surpassed, its pre-war efficiency, and I am sure that all those who know South London will confirm that eulogium.

I have already mentioned the all-important matter of price. This has been reduced twice during the year, and, while it still leaves something to be hoped for, it is more nearly in accord with the increased cost of living than has been the case for some time.

When I addressed you a year ago I expressed my firm conviction as to the outcome of the inquiry by the Board of Trade into the working of the therm system of valuing gas. I have not been disappointed. The report of the Committee has since been issued, and, although in these fast-moving times it may already seem ancient history, it is worth remembering that it emphatically supported the therm as a standard of computing gas values and prices. A curious circumstance is that it was first condemned by the gas industry and then by the public Press, but it has proved itself to be founded on sound principles and has in consequence become firmly established.

I must say something about working results. A vista

is opening up to us of coal carbonisation as a science. It has been in the past an empiricism. Its practice has been subject to the exigencies of coal-handling methods or their machinery. We now realise more and more that it should not be subject to, but should govern, them, and this in itself is a great step forward to a right conception of the process to which the coal is subjected.

Tar has fetched good prices. Its uses are mainly for the manufacture of patent fuel, or in the construction of road surfaces. For both these uses it is unequalled. The public owes much to the Road Board for its appreciation of the importance of scientific investigation as applied to the materials used for the formation of dustless, and therefore hygienic, roads. As a result, standard specifications thereof are now worked to in tar distilleries all over the country, so that uniform products, having uniform qualities, are available everywhere, and it is very important that both town and urban authorities should insist in their purchases upon compliance with the standards laid down by the Road Board. Bitumen, which is sometimes put forward as a substitute, is in no way superior for general use on roads, and it is, moreover, an imported, instead of a home-made, article.

The returns from ammonia are disappointing. For one thing, the price does not compare favourably with that realised for nitrate of soda on the nitrogen basis. While it is difficult to account for this, I cannot but feel it is in some degree due to the fact that the British production of sulphate is as a whole less efficiently handled than its great competitor in fertilisers. There is also the agricultural depression, which reacts, of course, upon the spending of money on fertilisers. Our export trade in sulphates, which was very unfairly restrained by the authorities after the war, now shows signs of recovery, and this is largely, if not wholly, due to the high quality of the sulphate we produce and its possession of peculiar characteristics, which render it particularly suitable for overseas delivery.

On the other hand, I wish it were possible to speak more hopefully of improvement in the quality of our raw material, coal. Although its cost to-day is almost that of a manufactured article, its freedom from impurity leaves a good deal to be desired.

DIVIDENDS.

The suggested payment of 5½ per cent. on the Ordinary stock may be looked upon as hardly all that might have been anticipated, especially remembering the past ten lean, and some very lean, years, when most other industries were allowed, and even encouraged, to make large profits. But in putting forward the proposal the all-important duty has been—and must, I think, be—that of restoring the undertaking to at least its pre-war stability, and if the immediate present would appear to be in any degree unsatisfying, the advantage to the undertaking of proceeding cautiously will undoubtedly redound to its advantage in the future. This self-same policy is reflected in building up the reserve fund, upon which we had to draw largely during the war, and putting it upon a basis comparable with altered circumstances of to-day. This must, of course, be a gradual process, but I feel sure it is one which will commend itself to every shareholder. In these matters I would ask you to exercise the same forbearance as you so notably exhibited during the long and trying period of depression from which we are gradually emerging.

The future is full of promise, and so long as the company maintains the traditions of fair dealing which have so long guided it, I do not think the public it serves will be likely to grudge the proportion of profit allocated as dividends.

As regards the redemption of the Preference stock, you will remember this was issued in 1916 to furnish extra working capital needed to enable us to meet the increased obligations brought about by the high trading prices during the war. It was believed that the need for this would automatically disappear as things righted themselves, and it was, therefore, issued in a temporary form. The redemption during the past year referred to in the report was the result of an invitation issued to holders to anticipate the date of repayment.

The co-partnership, founded over a third of a century ago, increases in strength and importance as the years pass. Under the scheme the co-partnership workers benefit in that they have security of employment for definite periods, together with a share of what surplus profits may result from carrying on the business. They also have a voice in matters relating to working conditions, questions affecting wages, and, as you know, elect by ballot three of their fellow employees to the directorate, and thus share in the responsibilities pertaining thereto.

The Resolution was carried unanimously.

FINANCE AND INVESTMENT

TRADE AND CREDIT—INDUSTRIAL COMPANIES' PROFITS.

THE London Clearing Banks' monthly statement of weekly averages for January reveals a further moderate increase in advances and a heavy expansion in bills discounted. The totals of the principal items are, in round figures, as follows:—

	Deposits.	Cash.	(In £1,000,000's) Bills.	Advances.	Inv'tm'ts.
Dec., '23	1,714	207	279	773	357
Jan., '24	1,715	200	295	777	363

From these figures it is evident that the banks are still able to finance improving trade without putting too great a strain on their existing resources. How much further they can go in this respect is by no means clear. Last month's credit requirements were met in part by allowing the cash ratio to fall, and to a certain extent by calling money off the short-loans market. The latter is a normal accompaniment of increasing trade demands. But neither it nor the depletion of cash resources can go on indefinitely. Sales of investments would certainly provide some additional basis for increasing loans and discounts, but the banks generally like to keep a fixed proportion of investments, and might not be inclined to reduce their holdings much further. When all adjustments have been made, however, it would seem that as trade continues to expand the cash resources of the banks will have to be enlarged.

Meanwhile, it should not be supposed that the increase in investments shown in the past month's figures signifies any inability on the part of the banks to find suitable employment for available funds. This suggestion has been made, but the evidence of the past month goes far more to prove the growing pressure on the banks for credit. The only direction in which investments have been materially increased has been the one in which it was most likely to occur, namely, in the case of the Midland Bank, whose advances are already 52.6 per cent. to deposits and whose December figures indicated an investment holding noticeably below what, to judge from past experience, may be said to be its usual proportion. In the case of this particular bank there has been an increase of £4 millions, but in none of the other Big Five figures have investment shown any noteworthy change. The following are the ratios to deposits of the principal items in the assets side of the balance sheets of the Big Five banks:—

Item.	PERCENTAGE OF DEPOSITS.				
	Mid.	West.	Lloyds.	N.P.U.	Barclays.
Dec. Advances	52.6	37.0	40.6	47.4	44.1
Investments	11.7	20.6	27.0	19.7	23.0
Bills	16.5	24.1	17.8	16.3	13.9
Jan. Advances	52.7	36.8	41.5	47.6	44.0
Investments	12.7	20.5	27.2	19.5	23.5
Bills	16.3	26.5	17.3	17.5	16.1

Apart from the increase in the Midland Bank's ratio of investments to deposits, one of the most interesting movements is the expansion in Lloyd's Bank advances from 40.6 to 41.5, representing about £2 millions on the month. Otherwise the various ratios of advances and investments are remarkable for their close approximation to those of the previous month. The expansion in the proportion of bill holdings is particularly noticeable in the case of Barclay's Bank, the Westminster Bank, and the National Provincial. In the case of the first-mentioned the increase is represented by over 2 per cent. of deposits, or between six and seven millions, and has been achieved by calling over £1½ millions off the money market and letting the cash ratio fall from 12.7 per cent. to the more normal 11.2 per cent. The Westminster Bank has also financed its larger bill holdings by reducing its money at call and notice; its cash ratio is practically unchanged. The same applies to the National Provincial. It will be seen, therefore, that the movement in trade is fast using up the liquid resources of the banks over and above the minimum which sound bank-

ing practice has shown should always be maintained. Whether the banks assist trade by increasing advances or by discounting commercial bills, the effect is much the same. The revival in trade can only go on if no attempt is made to restrict the supply of credit at the Bank of England.

The financial situation has been so largely affected by the increased activity in trade that it becomes important to consider whether or not things are likely to go on as they are. Money has certainly been "tight" in the short-loans market, and discount rates have also taken a decided upward turn. It is, moreover, quite probable that the normal exchange on the part of investors from gilt-edged and other fixed-interest investments to variable dividend stocks and shares has already more than begun. What does the future seem to hold in store? From the Board of Trade returns for January there seems reason to believe that present conditions will continue, a satisfactory feature of the returns being the maintenance of the export figures. It is, however, as we have seen, to a great extent a matter of financial policy as to whether the movement is encouraged or discouraged, and the change of Government since Mr. Baldwin, acting, it is generally thought, on the advice of Mr. McKenna, decided to adopt a stable money policy, may raise a question as to the continuity of that idea in the future. The new Government may or may not have consulted Mr. McKenna, and they may or may not have other views. It seems, however, in the highest degree improbable that a policy of credit restriction should again be allowed to raise its head whilst trade is definitely picking up and the unemployed are being so satisfactorily absorbed into industry. A continuance of the increased activity in trade, with its repercussions on the general financial and investment position, seems consequently likely to be an outstanding factor in calculations as to the course of events in future.

Encouraging results have been announced by several of the leading industrial companies, such as the Imperial Tobacco Company, Harrods, Selfridges, and Borax Consolidated. The Imperial Tobacco Company—one of the largest and most prosperous combines in the country—showed, for the year ended October 31st last, a further expansion in net profits of £275,610 at £7,474,687, the issued capital being £42½ millions. The dividend and bonus of 20 per cent. tax free compares with 22½ per cent. for 1921-22, but the amount distributed is actually over a million higher owing to the application of the dividend to the increased capital created by the issue of bonus shares (33 1-3 per cent.) last year. Imperial Tobacco Ordinary shares, which fluctuated between 65s. 9d. and 93s. 6d. last year and have been 66s. 6d. since January 2nd last, improved on the publication of the report to 72s. 6d. At that price they yield about 5½ per cent. free of tax.

Harrods Ordinary shares get 11 per cent. less tax this year instead of the 8 per cent. paid last year, and Selfridges 10 per cent. tax free, which is a repetition of the previous figure. Harrods' profits come to £567,800 net against £484,120 for 1922-23, and are all the more satisfactory when the low figures of 1921-22 are recalled, which were little more than one-third of the past year's earnings. The shares are now about 38s., and, on the basis of the past year's dividend, show a return to the buyer of nearly 6 per cent. Selfridges made a net profit of £332,052 for 1923-24 against £320,310 for the preceding twelve months. Most of this Company's capital is in Preference shares, and the whole of the Ordinary capital, which amounts to no more than £500,000 (issue), is privately held. Bohax Consolidated has made a net profit of £442,753, a figure rarely exceeded in its history.

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